



LIBRARY  
OF THE  
UNIVERSITY  
OF ILLINOIS

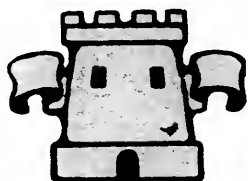
PRESENTED BY  
THE ESTATE  
OF

DR. AND MRS. S. M. WYLIE

1950  
834531  
oeE  
✓







# The Foreign Classical Romances

Complete in Twenty Crown Octavo Volumes

WITH INTRODUCTORY ESSAYS BY

**HAMILTON WRIGHT MABIE, L.H.D., LL.D.**

Co-Editor N. Y. Outlook.

Author of "Norse Stories," "Essays on Books and Culture," etc.

**PROF. MAURICE FRANCIS EGAN, A.M., LL.D.**

Catholic University of America.

Author of "Studies in Literature," "Modern Novelists," etc.

**PROF. LEO WIENER**

Harvard University. Translator of Tolstoy's Complete Works.

Author of "Anthology of Russian Literature," etc.

**BARON GUSTAVO TOSTI**

Doctor of Laws, Naples University. Royal Consul of Italy at Boston.

**WOLF VON SCHIERBRAND**

Former Berlin Correspondent N. Y. Evening Post. Author of "Germany," etc.

**A. SCHADE VAN WESTRUM**

Licentiate Amsterdam University. Literary Editor N. Y. Mail and Express.

**GENERAL EDITOR: LIONEL STRACHEY**

Compiler of "Little Masterpieces of Fiction."

Translator of Stories by Balzac, Sudermann, Serao, etc.

FRONTISPIECES AND BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCHES





VIKTOR VON SCHEFFEL

*Ekkehard Vol. I*



VIKTOR VON SCHEFFEL

EKKEHARD

*VOLUME I*

TRANSLATED FROM  
THE GERMAN



A FRONTISPIECE AND A  
BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

P. F. COLLIER & SON  
NEW YORK



834531

OeE

v. 1

9450 Marshall

# EKKEHARD

VOLUME ONE





## CONTENTS

	PAGE
LIFE OF SCHEFFEL.....	5
CHAPTER I	
HADWIG, DUCHESS OF SUABIA.....	9
CHAPTER II	
THE DISCIPLES OF SAINT GALLUS.....	25
CHAPTER III	
WIBORAD THE RECLUSE.....	46
CHAPTER IV	
IN THE MONASTERY.....	70
CHAPTER V	
EKKEHARD'S DEPARTURE.....	98
CHAPTER VI	
MOENGAL.....	121
CHAPTER VII	
VIRGIL ON THE HOHENTWIEL.....	140

# Contents

	PAGE
CHAPTER VIII	
AUDIFAX.....	158
CHAPTER IX	
THE WOMAN OF THE WOOD.....	177
CHAPTER X	
CHRISTMAS.....	205
CHAPTER XI	
THE OLD MAN OF THE PAGAN'S CAVE.....	227
CHAPTER XII	
THE APPROACH OF THE HUNS.....	252
CHAPTER XIII	
HERIBALD AND HIS GUESTS.....	280
CHAPTER XIV	
THE BATTLE WITH THE HUNS.....	310

## LIFE OF SCHEFFEL

**A**MONG all the writers of modern Germany who have been successfully instrumental toward molding that feeling for nationality finally expressed in the throne-room at Versailles, when King William I of Prussia was proclaimed German Emperor—among all such writers it would perhaps be difficult to name one who was at heart more “urdeutsch” (“fundamentally German,” that is) than the author of “Ekkehard.” Certainly no historical novel devoted to the “Fatherland” has ever known a better reception there, though it is for the critical specialist to fix the real place of that work in the literature of Germany and the world. But four years prior to the publication of this romance, there had already appeared the now famous national epic, “The Trumpeter of Säckingen” (1853), which even during Scheffel’s lifetime ran through one hundred editions. After his death—he was born in 1826, and lived just sixty years—the composer Nessler engaged the librettist Bunge to make an adaptation of that poem for the text of an opera by the same name, a charmingly melo-

## Life of Scheffel

dious work still enjoying considerable vogue in Germany. Säckingen is a little town on the Rhine, about twenty miles east of Bâle, and it was in this obscure spot of the Grand Duchy of Baden that Scheffel spent, as a jurist, the four or five years immediately preceding the publication of "The Trumpeter." He was born at the capital, however, and he died, too, at Karlsruhe, after a long and severe illness.

Always a great lover of mountain and river, forest and field, he had a somewhat quiet and retiring disposition, and his liking for nature and solitude he gratified by passing much of his time on the shores of the beautiful Lake of Constance, so rich in historical associations, and to the south so romantically bordered by the scenery of Switzerland and the Tyrol. Meanwhile, he stood well in the graces of Baden's grandduke, who, in recognition of his literary achievements, bestowed on him the prefix "von," a titular distinction also conferred; it may be remembered, on Goethe and Schiller, but one that, to this very day, the potentates of the Fatherland dispense charily in reward of literary merit.

No very lasting impression was made either by Scheffel's "Hugideo" or "Juniperus," historical novels that followed "Ekkehard"; but two of his volumes of verse are still popular, namely, the jovial "Gaudeamus" and the elegiacal "In the

## Life of Scheffel

Silence of the Forest," although neither of these has ever met with the extraordinary favor shown to "The Trumpeter of Säckingen." Yet, despite the lack of noteworthy quantity creditable to Scheffel, his quality seems to be acknowledged among the people in whose language he wrote. In Vienna a club was founded in his honor, and on one of the terraces belonging to the Castle of Heidelberg there stands a graven image of him, looking toward the valley of the grand old German Rhine he loved so well.



# EKKEHARD

## CHAPTER I

### HADWIG, DUCHESS OF SUABIA

It was almost a thousand years ago. The world knew nothing as yet of gunpowder or the art of printing.

Over the Hegau district there hung a gloomy leaden gray sky, corresponding to the mental darkness which, according to general opinion, oppressed the whole era of the Middle Ages. From the Lake of Constance, or Bodensee, white mists floated over the meads, covering up the whole country. Even the tower of the new church at Radolfszell was thickly enveloped, but the matins-bell had rung merrily through mist and fog like the words of a sensible man, which pierce the cloudy atmosphere that fools create.

It is a lovely part of Germany which lies there, between the Black Forest and the Suabian Lake. All those who are not too strict and exacting about poetical similes may be reminded of the following words of the poet:

## Ekkehard

“Ah fair is the Allemannic land  
With its bright transparent sky;  
And fair is its lake, so clear and blue  
Like a bonny maiden's eye;  
Like yellow locks, the corn-clad fields  
Surround this picture fair:  
And to a genuine German face  
This land one may compare.”

—though the continuation of this allegory might tempt one to celebrate any of the Hegau mountains as the prominent feature on the face of this country.

Sternly the summit of the Hohentwiel, with its craggy points and pinnacles, rises into the air. Like monuments of the stormy, stirring Past of our old mother Earth those steep picturesque mountain-pyramids rise from the plains which were once covered by undulating waves, as the bed of the present lake is now. For the fish and sea-gulls it must have been a memorable day, when the roaring and hissing began in the depths below, and the fiery basaltic masses made their way, rising out of the very bowels of earth, above the surface of the waters. But that was long, long ago, and the sufferings of those who were pitilessly annihilated in that mighty revolution have long been forgotten. Only the hills are there still to tell the weird tale. There they stand, unconnected with their neigh-



## Ekkehard

bors, solitary and defiant; as those who with fiery glowing hearts break through the bars and fetters of existing opinions must always be. Whether they in their inmost heart have still a recollection of the glorious time of their youth, when they greeted this beautiful upper world, for the first time with a jubilant cry, who knows?

The fortress of Hohentwiel, crested by stately towers and walls, had been held during his lifetime by Sir Burkhard, Duke of Suabia. He had been a valiant knight, and done many a good day's fighting in his time. The enemies of the Emperor were also his, and so there was always work to do. If everything was quiet in Italy, then the Normans became troublesome, and when these were fairly subjugated, perhaps the Hungarians would make an invasion, or some bishop or mighty earl grew insolent and rebellious, and had to be put down. In this way Sir Burkhard had spent his days more in the saddle than in the easy-chair, and it was not to be wondered at that he had gained for himself the reputation of great valor and bravery.

In Suabia it was said that he reigned like a true despot; and in far-off Saxony the monks wrote down in their chronicles that he had been an almost "invincible warrior."

Before Sir Burkhard was gathered to his forefathers, he had chosen a spouse for himself, in the person of the young Princess Hadwig, daughter of

## Ekkehard

the Duke of Bavaria. But the evening-glow of a declining life is ill matched with the light of the morning-star. Such a union is against nature's laws, and Dame Hadwig had accepted the old Duke of Suabia merely to please her father. It is true that she had nursed and tended him well, and held his gray hairs in honor; but when the old man laid himself down to die grief did not break her heart.

When all was over she buried him in the vault of his ancestors, erected a monument of gray sandstone to his memory, placed an ever-burning lamp over his grave, and sometimes—not too often—came down there to pray.

Thus Dame Hadwig lived now all alone in the castle of Hohentwiel. She remained in possession of all the landed property of her husband, with full right to do with it what she pleased. Besides this she was lady patroness of the bishopric of Constance and all the cloisters near the lake, and the Emperor had given her a bill of feoffment signed and sealed by his own hand, by which the regency of Suabia remained her own, as long as she kept true to her widowhood. The young widow possessed a very aristocratic mind and no ordinary amount of beauty. Her nose, however, was a trifle short, the lovely lips had a strong tendency to pout, and in her boldly projecting chin, the graceful dimple, so becoming to women, was not pres-

## Ekkehard

ent. All those whose features are thus formed unite to a clear intellect a not over-tender heart, and their disposition is more severe than charitable. For this reason the Duchess, in spite of her soft, beautiful complexion, inspired many of her subjects with a sort of trembling awe.

On that misty day aforementioned the Duchess was standing at one of her chamber-windows looking out into the distance. She wore a steel-gray undergarment, which fell down in graceful folds on her embroidered sandals, and over this a tight-fitting black tunic, reaching to the knees. In the girdle encircling her waist there glittered a large precious beryl. Her chestnut-brown hair was confined within a net of gold thread, but round her clear forehead some stray curls played unrestrainedly. On a small table of white marble stood a fantastically shaped vessel of dark green bronze, in which some foreign frankincense was burning, sending its fragrant white little cloudlets up to the ceiling. The walls were covered with many-colored finely woven tapestry.

There are days when one is dissatisfied with everything and everybody, and if one were suddenly transported into paradise itself, even paradise would not give contentment. At such times the thoughts wander gloomily from this to that subject, not knowing on what to fix themselves; out of every corner a distorted face seems grinning

## Ekkehard

at us, and he who is gifted with a very fine ear may even hear the derisive laughter of the goblins. It is a belief in those parts that the universal contrariety of such days arises from people having stepped out of bed with their left foot foremost, which is held to be in direct opposition to nature.

Under the spell of such a day the Duchess was laboring just now. She wanted to look out of the window, and a subtle wind blew the mist right into her face, which annoyed her. She began to cough hastily, but no doubt if the whole country had lain before her bathed in sunshine she would have found fault with that also.

Spazzo, the chamberlain, had come in meanwhile and stood respectfully waiting near the entrance. He threw a smiling, complacent look on his outward equipment, feeling sure to attract his mistress's eye to-day, for he had put on an embroidered shirt of finest linen and a splendid sapphire-colored upper garment, with purple seams. Everything was made in the latest fashion; and the bishop's tailor at Constance had brought the articles over only the day before.

The wolf-dog of the knight of Friedingen had killed two lambs of the ducal herd; therefore Master Spazzo intended to make his dutiful report and obtain Dame Hadwig's ducal opinion, whether he should conclude a peaceful agreement with the dog's master. or whether he were to bring in a

## Ekkehard

suit at the next session of the tribunal to have him fined and sentenced to pay damages. So he began his well-prepared speech, but before he had got to the end he saw the Duchess make a sign, the meaning of which could not remain unintelligible to a sensible man. She put her forefinger first up to her forehead, and then pointed with it to the door. So the chamberlain perceived that it was left to his own wits, not only to find the best expedient with regard to the lambs, but also to take himself off as quickly as possible. With a profound bow he withdrew accordingly.

In clear tones Dame Hadwig now called out: "Praxedis!"—and when the person thus named did not instantly make her appearance, she repeated in sharper accents, "Praxedis!"

It was not long before Praxedis entered the closet, with light, graceful steps. Praxedis was waiting-maid to the Duchess of Suabia. She was a Greek and a living proof that the son of the Byzantine Emperor Basilius had once asked the fair Hadwig's hand in marriage. He had made a present of the clever child, well instructed in music and the art of the needle, together with many jewels and precious stones, to the German duke's daughter, and in return had received a refusal. At that time one could give away human beings as well as buy and sell them. Liberty was not everybody's birthright. But slavery such as the

## Ekkehard

Greek child had to endure in the ducal castle in Suabia was not a very hard lot.

Praxedis had a small head with pale, delicate features, out of which a pair of large dark eyes looked into the world, unspeakably sad one moment and in the next sparkling with merriment. Her hair was arranged over her forehead in heavy braids, like a coronet. She was very beautiful.

"Praxedis, where is the starling?" said Dame Hadwig.

"I will bring it," replied the Greek maid; and she went and fetched the black little fellow, who sat in his cage with an important, impudent air, as if his existence were filling up a vast gap in the universe. The starling had made his fortune at Hadwig's wedding-feast. An old fiddler and juggler had taught him, with infinite pains, to repeat a Latin wedding-speech, and great was the merriment when at the banquet the bird was put on the table to say his lesson, "A new star has risen on the Suabian firmament; its name is Hadwig. Hail, all hail!" and so forth.

But this was not all the knowledge which the starling possessed. Besides these rhymes, he could also recite the Lord's Prayer. Now the bird was very obstinate, and had his caprices, as well as the Duchess of Suabia.

On this particular day the latter must have been thinking of old times, and the starling was to de-

## Ekkehard

liver the wedding-speech. The starling, however, had one of his pious moods. When Praxedis brought him into the chamber he called out solemnly: "Amen!" and when Dame Hadwig gave him a piece of gingerbread, and asked him in coaxing tones: "What was the name of the star on the Suabian firmament, my pretty one?" he slowly responded: "Lead us not into temptation." But when she whispered to him to brighten his memory: "The star's name is Hadwig, all hail!" then the starling, continuing in his pious strain, said: "And deliver us from evil."

"What, do birds even become insolent now?" exclaimed Dame Hadwig angrily. "Pussy, where art thou?" and she enticed toward her the black cat, which had long had an evil eye upon the starling, and which crept near softly with glittering eyes.

Dame Hadwig opened the cage, and left the bird to its mercy, but the starling, although the sharp claws had got hold of him already, ruffling and tearing his feathers, yet managed to escape, and flew out at the open window.

In a few moments he had become a mere black speck in the mist.

"Well, now really I might as well have kept him in the cage," said Dame Hadwig. "Praxedis, what dost thou think?"

"My mistress is always right whatever she does," replied the Greek maiden.

## Ekkehard

"Praxedis," continued the Duchess, "go and fetch me my trinkets. I wish to put on a bracelet."

So Praxedis, the ever-willing, went away, and returned with the casket of jewels. This casket was made of silver; on it a few figures had been embossed, representing the Saviour as the good Shepherd; St. Peter with the keys and St. Paul with the sword, and around these manifold leaves and twisted ornaments. Probably it had served for the keeping of relics formerly. Sir Burkhard had once brought it home, but he did not like to speak about it; for he returned at that time from a feud, in which he had vanquished and heavily thrown some bishop of Burgundy.

When the Duchess opened the casket, the rich jewels sparkled and glittered beautifully on their red velvet lining. Looking at such tokens of remembrance, many old memories came floating up to the surface again. Among other things there lay also the miniature of the Greek prince Constantine—smooth, pretty, and spiritless. It had been painted by the Byzantine master on a background of gold.

"Praxedis," said Dame Hadwig, "how would it have been if I had given my hand to that yellow-cheeked, peak-nosed prince of yours?"

"My liege Lady," was the answer, "I am sure that it would have been well."

"Well," continued Dame Hadwig, "tell me



## Ekkehard

something about your own dull home. I should like to know what my entrance into Constantinople would have been like."

"Oh, princess," said Praxedis, "my home is beautiful;" and with a melancholy look her dark eyes gazed into the misty distance—"and such a dreary sky, at least, would have been spared you on the Sea of Marmora. Even you would have uttered a cry of surprise when borne along by the proud galley, past the seven towers, the glittering masses of palaces, cupolas, churches, everything of dazzling white marble from the quarries of Prokonnesos, had first burst on our sight. From the blue waves the stately water-lily proudly lifts her snowy petals, here a wood of dark cypress trees, there the gigantic cupola of the Hagia Sophia; on one side the long-stretched cape of the Golden Horn, and opposite, on the Asiatic shore, another magnificent city. And like a golden blue girdle, the sea, freighted with its innumerable ships, encircles this magic sight. Oh, my mistress, even in my dreams far away here in the Suabian land, I can not realize the splendor of that view. And then, when the sun has sunk down, and the sable night steals over the glittering waves, then everything is bathed in blue Greek fire in honor of the royal bride. Now we enter the port. The big chain which usually bars it drops down before the bridal ship. Torches burn on the shore. There

## Ekkehard

stand the Emperor's bodyguard, the Varagians with their two-edged battle-axes, and the blue-eyed Normans; there the patriarch with innumerable priests; everywhere one hears music and shouts of joy, and the imperial prince in the bloom of youth welcomes his betrothed, and the royal train direct their steps toward the palace of Blacharnæ. . . ."

"And all this splendor I have thrown away," sneered Dame Hadwig. "Praxedis, thy picture is not complete, for on the following day comes the patriarch to hold a sharp discourse with the western Christian, and to instruct her in all the heresies which flourish on the barren, arid soil of your religion, like deadly nightshade and henbane. Then I am instructed what to believe of their monkish pictures and the decrees of the Councils of Chalcedon and Nicæa. After him comes the mistress of the ceremonies, to teach me the laws of etiquette and court manners; what expression to wear on my face, and how to manage my train; when to prostrate myself before the Emperor and when to embrace my mother-in-law. Further, how to treat this or that favorite with courtesy, and to use this or that monstrous form of speech in addressing some wonderful personage: 'If it please your Eminence, your Highness, your adorable Greatness!' Whatever can be called originality and natural strength is nipped in the bud, and my lord and master turns out to be a painted doll like the rest.

## Ekkehard

Then perhaps some fine morning the enemy appears before the gates, or the successor is not to the liking of the Blues and Greens of the Circus; revolution rages through the streets, and the German duke's daughter is put into a convent, bereft of her eyesight. . . . What good does it do her then that her children were addressed as their Highnesses when still in the cradle? Therefore, Praxedis, I did not go to Constantinople!"

"The Emperor is the master of the universe, and his will is forever just," said the Greek, "so I have been taught to believe."

"Hast thou ever reflected that it is a very precious boon for a man to be his own master?"

"No," said Praxedis.

The turn which the conversation had taken pleased the Duchess.

"What account of me did your Byzantine painter who was sent to take my likeness carry home, I wonder?"

The Greek maid seemed not to have heard the question. She had risen from her seat and gone to the window.

"Praxedis," said the Duchess with asperity, "I want an answer."

Thus questioned, Praxedis turned round and, faintly smiling, said: "That was a pretty long time ago, but Master Michael Thallelaios did not speak over well of you. He told us that he had

## Ekkehard

prepared his finest colors and gold-leaves, that you had been a lovely child, and that when brought before him to be painted, he had felt as if he must do his very utmost, a thrill of awe coming over him as when he painted God's holy mother for the monastery of Athos. But Princess Hadwig had been pleased to distort her face; and when he had ventured to raise a modest objection, her Grace put out her tongue, held two outspread hands to her nose, and said in very graceful broken Greek that this was the right position to be painted in. The imperial court painter profited by the occasion to express his opinion about the want of manners and education in German lands, and has vowed never again to try and paint a young German lady. And the Emperor Basilius on hearing this account growled fiercely through his beard. . . ."

"Let his Majesty growl as long as he chooses," said the Duchess, "and pray to Heaven that he may bestow the patience which I lost that day, on others. I have not yet had an opportunity of seeing any monkeys, but according to all that is told about them, by trustworthy men, Master Michael's pedigree must extend to those members of the creation."

Meanwhile she had put on the bracelet. It represented two serpents twisted together and kissing each other. On the head of each rested a tiny

## Ekkehard

crown. From the mass of other trinkets, a heavy silver arrow had got into her hands and it also left its prison-house for a fairer abode. It was drawn through the meshes of the golden threaded net.

As if to try the effect of the ornaments, Dame Hadwig now walked with stately steps through the chamber. Her attitude seemed to challenge admiration, but the hall was empty; even the cat had slunk away. Mirrors there were none on the walls, and as for the furniture, its adaptation to comfort was but small, according to our present views.

Praxedis's thoughts were still busy with the subject just discussed. "My gracious Mistress," said she, "I nevertheless felt sorry for him."

"Sorry for whom?"

"For the Emperor's son. He said that you had appeared to him in a dream, and that all his happiness depended upon you."

"Let the dead rest," said Dame Hadwig testily. "I had rather that you took your guitar and sang me the Greek ditty:

"Constantine, thou foolish lad—

Constantine, leave off thy weeping!"

"The lute is broken, and all the strings torn, since my Lady Duchess pleased to . . ."

"To throw it at the head of Count Boso of Burgundy," said Dame Hadwig. "That was well done

## Ekkehard

indeed, for who told him to come uninvited to Sir Burkhard's funeral, and to preach to me, as if he were a saint? So we will have the lute mended, and meanwhile, my Greek treasure, canst thou tell me why I have donned these glittering ornaments to-day?"

"God is all-knowing," said the Greek maid, "I can not tell."

After this she was silent. So was Dame Hadwig, and there ensued one of those long significant pauses generally preceding confession. At last the Duchess said: "Well, to say the truth, I don't know myself!"—and looking dismally at the floor, added: "I believe I did it because there was nothing else to do. But then the top of the Hohentwiel is a dreary nest—especially for a widow. Praxedis, dost thou know a remedy against dulness?"

"I once heard from a very wise preacher," said Praxedis, "that there are several remedies. Sleeping, drinking, and traveling—but that the best is fasting and praying."

Then Dame Hadwig rested her head on her lily-white hand, and looking sharply at the quick-witted Greek, she said: "To-morrow we will go on a journey."

# Ekkehard

## CHAPTER II

### THE DISCIPLES OF SAINT GALLUS

THE next day, the Duchess crossed the Bodensee in the early glow of the morning sun, accompanied by Praxedis and a numerous train. The lake was beautifully blue; the flags floated in the air, and much fun was going on, on board the ship. And who could be melancholy, when gliding over the clear, crystal waters; past the green shores with their many towers and castles; snowy peaks rising in the distance; and the reflection of the white sails, trembling and breaking in the playful waves?

Nobody knew where the end of the journey was to be. But then they were accustomed to obey without questioning.

When they approached the bay at Rorschach, the Duchess commanded them to land there. So the prow was turned to the shore, and soon after she crossed lightly over the rocking plank and stepped on land. Here the toll-gatherer, who received the duty from all those who traveled to Italy, and the market-master, as well as those who

## Ekkehard

held any official position, came to meet their sovereign; and calling out lustily "Hail Mistress!" waved big branches of mighty fir trees over their heads. Graciously returning their salutations, the Duchess walked through the deferential crowd, which fell back on either side, and ordered her chamberlain to distribute some silver coins—but there was not much time for tarrying. Already the horses which had been secretly sent on before, in the night, stood ready waiting, and when all were in the saddle, Dame Hadwig gave the word of command: "To the holy Gallus." Then her servants looked at each other with wondering eyes, as if asking, "What business can we have there?" But there was not even time for an answer, as the cavalcade was already cantering over the hilly ground toward the monastery itself.

St. Benedict and his disciples knew very well on what places to build their monasteries. Uphill and downhill, wherever you find a large building, which like a fortress commands a whole tract of land, or blocks up the entrance to a valley, or forms the central point of crossing highways, or that lies buried among vineyards, famous for their exquisite wines—there the passing tourist—until the contrary has been proved to him—may boldly advance the assertion that the house in question belongs, or rather belonged formerly, to the order of St. Benedict, for in our days mon-



## Ekkehard

asteries become scarcer and inns more plentiful, which phenomenon may be ascribed to the progress of civilization.

The Irish saint Gallus had also chosen a lovely spot when, pining for forest-air, he had settled down in this Helvetian solitude: in a high mountain-glen, separated by steep hills from the milder shores of the Bodensee, through which many a wild torrent rushed in mad flight, while on the other side rose the gigantic rocks of the Alpstein, whose snow-capped peaks disappear in the clouds, there, sheltered by the mountain, the monastery lay cradled at its foot. It was a strange thing for those apostles of Albion and Erin to extend their missions into the German continent, but if one examines the matter closely, their merit in doing so is not so great as it appears at first sight.

"The taste for visiting foreign lands is so deeply rooted in the minds of Britons, that it can not be eradicated"—thus wrote as early as in the times of Charlemagne, a simple, trustworthy historian. They were simply the predecessors and ancestors of the present British tourists, and might be recognized even at a distance by the foreign, curious shape of their knapsacks. Now and then one of them would settle down for good somewhere, although the honest natives of the soil did not always look with favorable eyes on the intruder. Still their greater pertinacity, the inheritance of

## Ekkehard

all Britons, the art of colonizing and the mystic veneration which all that is foreign, always inspires in the lower classes, made their missionary endeavors rather successful. With other times we have other customs! In the present day the descendants of those saints are making railroads for the Swiss, for good Helvetian money.

On the spot near the Steinach where once had stood the simple cell of the Hibernian hermit, and where he had fought with bears, goblins, and water-fairies, a spacious monastery had been built. Above the lower shingle-covered roofs of the dwelling and school houses, the octagon church-tower rose in all its splendor; granaries, cellars, and sheds abounded also, and even the merry sound of a mill-wheel might be heard, for all the necessities of life had to be prepared within the precincts of the cloister; so that the monks need not go too far beyond the boundaries, thereby endangering their souls. A strong wall, with heavy well-barred gates, surrounded the whole; less for ornament than for security, since there was many a powerful knight in those times who did not much heed the last commandment, "Do not covet thy neighbor's goods."

It was past the dinner-hour, and a deep calm lay over the valley. The rules of St. Benedict prescribed that at that hour everybody should seek his couch, and though on that side of the

## Ekkehard

Alps the terrible heat of an Italian sun, which forces one into the arms of Morpheus, is never felt, the pious monks nevertheless followed this rule to the letter.

Only the guard on the watch-tower stood upright and faithful as ever, near the little chamber-window, waging war with the innumerable flies buzzing about him. His name was Romeias, and he was noted for keeping a sharp lookout.

Suddenly he heard the tramp of horses' feet in the neighboring fir-wood, to which he listened intently. "Eight or ten horsemen," muttered he, and upon this quickly dropped down the portcullis from the gate, drew up the little bridge leading over the moat, and then took his horn from a nail in the wall. Finding that some spiders had been weaving their cobwebs in it, he gave it a good rubbing.

At that moment the outriders of the cavalcade became visible on the outskirts of the pine-wood. When Romeias caught sight of them, he first scratched his head and then eyed the approaching party with a very puzzled look. "Women folk?" he exclaimed aloud, but in that exclamation there was neither pleasure nor edification.

He seized his horn and blew three times into it, with all his might. They were rough, uncouth notes that he produced, from which one might conclude that neither the muses nor the graces

## Ekkehard

had kindly surrounded the cradle of Romeias when he first saw the light of this world at Villingen in the Black Forest.

Any one who has often been in a wood must have observed the life in an ant-hill. There, everything is well organized; each ant attending to its business and perfect harmony reigning in all the bustle and movement. Now you put your stick into it, frightening the foremost ants, and instantly all is wild confusion, and a disorderly running hither and thither ensues. And all this commotion has been brought about by one single movement of your stick. Now the sounds coming from the horn of Romeias had just the same disturbing effect in the monastery.

The windows of the great hall in the school-house were filled with young inquisitive faces. Many a lovely dream vanished out of the solitary cells, without ever coming to an end, and many a profound meditation of half-awake thinkers as well. The wicked Sindolt, who at this hour used to read the forbidden book of Ovid's "Art of Love," hastily rolled up the parchment leaves and hid them carefully in his straw mattress.

The Abbot Cralo jumped up from his chair; stretched his arms heavy with sleep, and then dipping his forefinger into a magnificent silver washing basin, standing before him on a stone table, wetted his eyes to drive away the drowsiness that

## Ekkehard

was still lingering there. After this he limped to the open bow-window, but when he beheld who it was that had occasioned all this disturbance, he was as unpleasantly surprised as if a walnut had dropped on his head, and exclaimed: "St. Benedict save us! my cousin the Duchess!"

He then quickly adjusted his habit, gave a brush to the scanty tuft of hair which his head still boasted of and that grew upward like a pine-tree in a sandy desert; put on his golden chain with the cloister seal on it, took his abbot's staff made of the wood of an apple-tree adorned with a richly carved handle of ebony, and then descended into the courtyard.

"Can't you hasten?" called out one of the party outside. Then the Abbot commanded the door-keeper to ask them what they demanded. Romeias obeyed.

A bugle now sounded and the chamberlain Spazzo, in the capacity of herald, rode up close to the gate, and called out loudly:

"The Duchess and reigning sovereign of Suabia sends her greeting to St. Gallus. Let the gates be opened to receive her."

The Abbot heaved a deep sigh, then climbed up to Romeias's watch-tower and, leaning on his staff, gave his blessing to those standing outside, and spoke thus:

"In the name of St. Gallus, the most unworthy

## Ekkehard

of his followers returns his thanks for the gracious greeting. But his monastery is no Noah's ark into which every species of living thing, pure and impure, male and female, may enter. Therefore, although my heart is filled with regret, to sanction your entrance is an impossibility. On the last day of judgment, the abbot is held responsible for the souls of those entrusted to him. The presence of a woman, although the noblest in the land, and the frivolous speech of the children of this world, would be too great a temptation for those who are bound to strive first after the kingdom of Heaven and its righteousness. Do not trouble the conscience of the shepherd who anxiously watches over his flock. The canonical laws bar the gate. The gracious Duchess will find at Trojen or Rorschach a house belonging to the monastery at her entire disposal."

Dame Hadwig, who had been sitting on horseback impatiently enough hitherto, now struck her white palfrey with her riding-whip, and reining it so as to make it rear and step backward, called out laughingly:

"Spare yourself all your fine words, cousin Cralo, for I will see the cloister."

In doleful accents, the Abbot began: "Woe unto him by whom offense cometh. It were better for him . . ."

But his warning speech did not come to an end;

## Ekkehard

for Dame Hadwig, entirely changing the tone of her voice, sharply said: "Sir Abbot, the Duchess of Suabia must see the monastery."

Then the much afflicted man perceived that further contradiction could scarcely be offered without damaging the future prospects of the monastery. Yet his conscience still urged him to opposition.

Whenever a person is in a doubtful position, and is uncertain how to act, it is a great comfort to the vacillating mind to ask the advice of others; for that expedient lessens the responsibility, and is a solid support to fall back upon.

Therefore Sir Cralo now called down: "As you insist so peremptorily, I must put the case first before the assembled brotherhood. Until then, pray have patience."

He walked back through the courtyard, inwardly wishing that a second great flood might come, and destroy the highway on which such unwelcome guests had come. His limping gait was hurried and excited, and it is not to be wondered at, since the chronicler reports of him that he had fluttered up and down the cloister-walk at that critical moment like a swallow before a thunder-storm.

Five times the little bell of St. Othmar's chapel near the great church rang out now; calling the brothers to the reading-room. The solitary cross-

## Ekkehard

passages filled quickly with cowl-bearing figures; all going toward the place of assembly, which, opposite the hexagonal main building, was a simple gray hall, under the peristyle of which a graceful fountain shed its waters into a metal basin.

On a raised brick floor stood the abbot's marble chair, adorned with two roughly carved lions' heads. With a very pleasurable sensation the eye, from under these dark arches and pillars, looked out on the greenness of the little garden in the inner court. Roses and hollyhocks flourished and bloomed in it; for kind nature even smiles on those who have turned their backs on her.

The white habits and dark-colored mantles contrasted well with the gray stone walls, as one after the other entered noiselessly. A hasty bend of the head was the mutual greeting. Thus they stood in silent expectation, while the morning sun came slanting in through the narrow windows, lighting up their different faces.

They were tried men—a holy senate, well pleasing to God's sight.

He with the shrunk figure and sharp-featured pale face, bearing the traces of much fasting and many night vigils, was Notker the stutterer. A melancholy smile played about his lips. The long practise of asceticism had removed his spirit from the present. In former times he had composed very beautiful melodies; but now he had taken a



## Ekkehard

more gloomy tendency and at night was constantly challenging demons to fight with him. In the crypt of the holy Gallus he had lately encountered the devil himself and beaten him so heartily that the latter hid himself in a corner, dismally howling. Envious tongues said that Notker's melancholy song of "*media vita*" had also a dark origin; as the Evil One had revealed it to him in lieu of ransom, when he lay ignominiously conquered, on the ground, under Notker's strong foot. Close to him there smiled a right honest and good-natured face, framed in by an iron-gray beard. That was the mighty Tutilo, who loved best to sit before the turning-lathe, and carve exquisitely fine images of ivory. Some proofs of his skill even now exist, such as the diptychon with the Virgin Mary's ascension, and the bear of St. Gallus. But when his back began to ache, humming an old song, he would leave his work, to go wolf-hunting, or to engage in an honest boxing-match, by way of recreation; for he preferred fighting with wicked men to wrestling with midnight ghosts, and often said to his friend Notker: "He who like myself has imprinted his mark on many a Christian as well as heathen back, can well afford to do without demons." Then came Ratpert, the long-tried teacher of the school; who left his historical books most unwillingly whenever the little bell called him to an assembly. He carried his head somewhat high,

## Ekkehard

yet he and the others, though their characters differed so much, were one heart and one soul: a three-leaved cloister shamrock. Being one of the last who entered the hall, he had to stand near his old antagonist, the evil Sindolt; this man, pretending not to see him, whispered something to his neighbor, a little man with a face like a shrew-mouse, who, puckering up his lips, tried hard not to smile; for the whispered remark had been: that in the large dictionary by Bishop Salomon, beside the words "*rabulista* signifies some one who can not help disputing about everything in the world" some unknown hand had added, "like Ratpert, our great thinker."

Now in the background there towered above the rest the tall figure of Sintram the famous calligraphist; whose letters were then the wonder of the whole cisalpine world, but the greatest of St. Gallus's disciples, with regard to length of body, were the Scotchmen, who had taken their stand close to the entrance.

Fortegian and Failan, Dubslan and Brendan, and so on, inseparable compatriots secretly grumbling over what they considered the neglect shown them. The sandy-haired Dubduin was also among them, who, in spite of the heavy iron penitential chain which he wore, had not been elected prior. As a punishment for the biting satirical verses, which he had composed on his German brothers,

## Ekkehard

he had been sentenced to water the dead peach-tree in the garden for three years.

Notker, the physician, had also joined the assembly. He had but lately administered the wondrous remedy for the Abbot's lame foot; an ointment made of fish-brain, wrapped up in the fresh skin of a wolf, the warmth of which was to stretch out the contracted sinews. His nickname was Peppercorn, on account of the strictness with which he maintained the monastic discipline. And Wolo, who could not bear to look at a woman or a ripe apple, was there, and also Engelbert, the founder of the collection of wild beasts, and Gerhard the preacher, and Folkard the painter. Who could name them all, the excellent masters, whose names, when mentioned, called up in the next generation of monks feelings of melancholy and regret, as they confessed, that such men were becoming scarcer every day?

When all were assembled, the Abbot mounted his chair, and the consultation began forthwith. The case, however, proved to be a very difficult one.

Ratpert spoke first, and demonstrated from history in what way the Emperor Charlemagne had once been enabled to enter the monastery. "In that instance," he said, "it was presumed that he was a member of the order, as long as he was within our precincts, and all pretended not to know who he

## Ekkehard

was. Not a word was spoken of imperial dignity, or deeds of war, or humble homage. He walked about among us like any other monk, and that he was not offended thereby, the letter of protection, which he threw over the wall, when departing, well proved."

But in this way, the great difficulty—the person asking for admittance being a woman—could not be got rid of. The stricter ones among the brotherhood grumbled, and Notker, the Peppercorn, said: "She is the widow of that destroyer of countries, and ravager of monasteries, who once carried off our most precious chalice as a war contribution, saying the derisive words: 'God neither eats nor drinks, so what can he do with golden vessels?' I warn you not to unbar the gate." This advice, however, did not quite suit the Abbot, as he wished to find a compromise. The debate became very stormy, one saying this, the other that. Brother Wolo, on hearing that the discussion was about a woman, softly slunk out, and locked himself up in his cell.

At last one of the brothers rose and requested to be heard.

"Speak, Brother Ekkehard!" called out the Abbot, and the noisy tumult was hushed, for all liked to hear Ekkehard speak. He was still young in years, of a very handsome figure, and he captivated everybody who looked at him by his graceful mien

## Ekkehard

and pleasing expression. Besides this he was both wise and eloquent, an excellent counselor and a most learned scholar. At the cloister-school he taught Virgil, and though the rule prescribed that none but a wise and hoary man, whose age would guard him from the abuse of his office, and who by his experience would be a fit counselor for all, should be made custodian, yet the brothers had agreed that Ekkehard united in himself all the necessary requirements, and consequently had entrusted him with that office.

A scarcely perceptible smile had played around his lips, while the others were disputing. He now raised his voice and spoke thus: "The Duchess of Suabia is the monastery's patron, and in such capacity is equal to a man, and as our monastic rules strictly forbid that a woman's foot shall touch the cloister-threshold, she may easily be carried over."

Upon this the faces of the old men brightened up, as if a great load had been taken off their minds. A murmur of approbation ran through the assembly, and the Abbot likewise was not insensible to the wise counsel.

"Verily, the Lord often reveals himself, even unto a younger brother! Brother Ekkehard, you are guileless like the dove, and prudent like the serpent. So you shall carry out your own advice. I give you herewith the necessary dispensation."

## Ekkehard

A deep blush overspread Ekkehard's features, but he quietly bowed his head in sign of obedience.

"And what about the female attendants of the Duchess?" asked the Abbot. But here the assembly unanimously decided that even the most liberal interpretation of the monastic laws could not grant them admittance. The evil Sindolt proposed that they should meanwhile pay a visit to the recluses on Erin hill, because when the monastery of St. Gallus was afflicted by a visitation, it was but fair that the pious Wiborad should bear her share of it. After having held a whispering consultation with Gerold, the steward, about the supper, the Abbot descended from his high chair, and, accompanied by the brotherhood, went out to meet his guests. These had meanwhile ridden three times round the cloister-walls, banishing the tedium of waiting by merry jests and laughter. The air of "*Justus Germinavit*," the monotonous hymn in praise of St. Benedict, was struck up by the monks, who were now heard approaching. The heavy gate opened, creaking on its hinges, and out came the Abbot at the head of the procession of friars, who walking, two and two together, chanted the hymn just mentioned.

Then the Abbot gave a sign to stop the singing.

"How do you do, cousin Cralo?" flippantly cried the Duchess from her saddle. "I have not seen you for an age! Do you still limp?"

## Ekkehard

Cralo, however, replied with dignity: "It is better that the shepherd should limp than the flock. Be pleased to hear the monastery's decree." And forthwith he communicated the condition on which she was to enter.

Then Dame Hadwig replied smilingly: "During all the time that I have wielded the sceptre in Suabia, such a proposition has never been made to me. But the laws of your order shall be respected. Which of the brothers have you chosen to carry the Sovereign over the threshold?" But on casting her sparkling eyes over the ranks of the spiritual champions and beholding the dark fanatical face of Notker, the stutterer, she whispered to Praxedis: "Maybe we shall turn back at once."

"There he stands," said the Abbot.

Dame Hadwig following with her eyes the direction which the Abbot's forefinger indicated, then beheld Ekkehard, and it was a long gaze which she cast on his tall, handsome figure and noble countenance, glowing with youth and intellect. "We shall not turn back" was implied by a significant nod to Praxedis, and before the short-necked chamberlain, who in most cases was willing enough but was generally too slow, had dismounted, and approached her palfrey, she had gracefully alighted, and, approaching the custodian, she said: "Now then, perform your office."

Ekkehard had been trying meanwhile to com-

## Ekkehard

pose an address, which in faultless Latin was intended to justify the strange liberty he was about to take, but when she stood before him, proud and commanding, his voice failed him, and the speech remained where it had been conceived—in his thoughts. Otherwise, however, he had not lost his courage, and so he lifted up his fair burden with his strong arms, who, putting her right arm round his shoulder, seemed not displeased with her novel position.

Cheerfully he thus stepped over the threshold which no woman's foot was allowed to touch; the Abbot walking by his side, and the chamberlain and vassals following. The serving ministrants swung their censers gaily into the air, and the monks, marching behind in a double file as before, sung the last verses of the unfinished hymn.

It was a wonderful spectacle, such as never occurred, either before or after in the monastery's history, and by those prone to useless moralizing many a wise observation might be made, in connection with the monk's carrying the Duchess, on the relation of church and state in those times, and the changes which have occurred since; but these reflections we leave each one to make for himself. Natural philosophers affirm that at the meeting of animate objects invisible powers begin to act, streaming forth and passing from one to the other, thus creating strange affinities. This story was



## Ekkehard

proved true at least with regard to the Duchess and her bearer, for while she was being rocked in his arms, she thought inwardly: "Indeed, never the hood of St. Benedict has covered a more graceful head than this one," and when Ekkehard put down his burden with shy deference in the cool cross-passage, he was struck by the thought, that the distance from the gate had never appeared so short to him before.

"I suppose that you found me very heavy?" said the Duchess.

"My liege lady, you may boldly say of yourself as it has been written, 'My yoke is easy and my burden is light,' " was the reply.

"I should not have thought that you would turn the words of Scripture into a flattering speech. What is your name?"

"They call me Ekkehard."

"Ekkehard, I thank you," said the Duchess with a graceful wave of her hand.

He stepped back to an oriel window in the cross-passage, and looked out into the little garden. Was it mere chance that the image of St. Christopher now rose before his inward eye? He also considered his burden a light one when he began to carry the child-stranger through the water, on his strong shoulder; but heavier and heavier the burden weighed on his back, and pressing him downward into the roaring flood, deep, and deeper still;

## Ekkehard

so that his courage began to fail him, and was well-nigh turned into despair. . . .

The Abbot had ordered a magnificent jug to be brought, and, taking it in his hand, he went himself to the well, filled it, and, presenting it to the Duchess, said: "It is the duty of the Abbot to bring water to strangers for them to wash their hands, as well as their feet and . . ."

"We thank you, but we do not want it," said the Duchess, interrupting him, in her most decided accents.

Meanwhile two of the brothers had carried down a box, which now stood open in the passage. Out of this the Abbot drew a monk's habit, quite new, and said: "Thus I ordain our monastery's mighty patron a member of our brotherhood, and adorn him with the holy garb of our order."

Dame Hadwig complied, lightly bending her knee, on receiving the cowl from his hands, and then she put on the garment, which became her well, being ample, and falling in rich folds; for the rule says:

"The abbot is to keep a strict watch that the garments be not too scanty, but well fitted to their wearers."

The beautiful rosy countenance looked lovely in the brown hood.

"And you must likewise follow the example of your mistress," said the Abbot to the retinue of the

## Ekkehard

Duchess, upon which the evil Sindolt gleefully assisted Master Spazzo to don the garb.

"Do you know," he whispered into his ear, "what this garment obliges you to? In putting it on, you swear to renounce the evil lusts of the world and the flesh, and in future to lead a sober, self-denying, and chaste life."

Master Spazzo, who had already put his right arm into the ample gown, pulled it back hastily and exclaimed with terror: "I protest against this;" but when Sindolt struck up a loud guffaw, he perceived that things were not quite so serious and said: "Brother, you are a wag."

In a few minutes the vassals were also adorned with the garb of the holy order, but the beards of some of the newly created monks descended to the girdle, in opposition to the rules, and also they were not quite canonical as to the modest casting down of their eyes.

The Abbot led his guests into the church.

# Ekkehard

## CHAPTER. III

### WIBORAD THE RECLUSE

LEAST of all delighted by the arrival of the unexpected guests, was Romeias the gatekeeper. He had a presentiment what part of the trouble was likely to fall to his share, but he did not yet know the whole of it. While the Abbot received the Duchess, Gerold, the steward, came up to him and said:

“Romeias, prepare to go on an errand. You are to tell the people on the different farms, to send in the fowls that are due before evening, as they will be wanted at the feast, and besides you are to procure as much game as possible.”

This order pleased Romeias well. It was not the first time that he had been to ask for fowls, and yeomen and farmers held him in great respect, as he had a commanding manner of speaking. Hunting was at all times the delight of his heart, and so Romeias took his spear, hung the cross-bow over his shoulder, and was just going to call out a pack of hounds, when Gerold pulled his sleeve and said: “Romeias, one thing more! You are to accom-

## Ekkehard

pany the Duchess's waiting-women, who have been forbidden to enter the monastery, to the Schwarza Valley, and present them to the pious Wiborad, who is to entertain them as pleasantly as may be, until the evening. And you are to be very civil, Romeias, and I tell you there is a Greek maid among them with the darkest eyes imaginable. . . ."

On hearing this, a deep frown of displeasure darkened Romeias's forehead, and, vehemently thrusting his spear to the ground, he exclaimed: "I am to accompany womenfolk? That is none of the business of the gatekeeper of St. Gallus's monastery—" but Gerold with a significant nod toward him, continued: "Well, Romeias, you must try to do your best; and have you never heard that watchmen, who have faithfully performed their missions, have found an ample jug of wine in their room of an evening—eh, Romeias?"

The discontented face brightened up considerably, and so he went down to let out the hounds. The bloodhound and the beagle jumped up gaily, and the little beaver-puppy also set up a joyous bark, hoping to be taken out likewise; but with a contemptuous kick it was sent back, for the hunter had nothing to do with fish-ponds and their inhabitants. Surrounded by his noisy pack of hounds, Romeias strode out of the gate.

Praxedis and the other waiting-women of the Duchess had dismounted from their horses and

## Ekkehard

seated themselves on a grassy slope, chatting away about monks and cowls and beards, as well as about the strange caprices of their mistress, when Romeias suddenly appeared before them and said: "Come on!"

Praxedis looked at the rough sportsman, and not quite knowing what to make of him, pertly said: "Where to, my good friend?"

Romeias, however, merely lifted his spear, and, pointing with it to a neighboring hill behind the woods, held his tongue.

Then Praxedis called out: "Is speech such a rare article in St. Gall, that you do not answer properly when questioned?"

The other maids giggled, upon which Romeias said solemnly: "May you all be swallowed up by an earthquake, seven fathoms deep."

"We are very much obliged to you, good friend," was Praxedis's reply, and the necessary preliminaries for a conversation being thus made, Romeias informed them of the commission he had received, and the women followed him willingly enough.

After some time the gatekeeper found out that it was not the hardest work to accompany such guests, and when the Greek maid desired to know something about his business and sport, his tongue got wonderfully loosened, and he even related his great adventure with the terrible boar, into whose

## Ekkehard

side he had thrown his spear and yet had not been able to kill it, for one of its feet would have loaded a cart, and its hair stood up as high as a pine-tree, and its teeth were twelve feet long at the least. After this he grew still more civil, for when the Greek once stopped to listen to the warbling of a thrush, he waited also patiently enough, though a singing-bird was too miserable a piece of game for him to give much heed to; and when Praxedis bent down for a pretty brass-beetle, crawling about in the moss, Romeias politely tried to push it toward her, with his heavy boot, and, when in doing so he crushed it instead, this was certainly not his intention.

They climbed up a wild, steep wood-path, beside which the Schwarza brook flowed over jagged rocks. On that slope the holy Gallus had once fallen into some thorny bushes, and had said to his companion, who wanted to lift him up: "Here let me lie, for here shall be my resting-place and my abode forever."

They had not walked far before they came to a clearing in the fir-wood, where leaning against a sheltering rock stood a simple chapel in the shape of a cross. Close to it a square little stone hut was built, in which but one tiny window with a wooden shutter was to be seen. Opposite there stood another hut exactly like it, having also but one little window.

## Ekkehard

It was customary at that time for those who inclined to the monastic life, and who, as St. Benedict expressed himself, felt strong enough to fight the Devil without the assistance of pious companions, to immure themselves in that way. They were called "*reclausi*"—that is, "walled in"—and their usefulness and aim in life may well be compared to that of the pillar-saints in Egypt. The sharp winds of winter, and frequent falls of snow rendered their movement in the open air somewhat difficult, but their longing for an anchorite's life was nevertheless quite strong.

Within those four walls on the Hill of Erin there lived Sister Wiborad, a far-famed recluse of her time. She came from Klingnau in Aargau, and had been a proud and prudish virgin, versed in many an art, besides being able to recite all the Psalms in the Latin tongue, which she had learned from her brother Hitto. She was not, however, quite opposed to the idea of sweetening the life of some man or other, but the flower of the youth at Aargau did not find grace in her eyes; and one day she set out on a pilgrimage to Rome. There in the holy city her restless mind must have undergone some great shock, but none of her contemporaries ever knew in what way. For three entire days her brother Hitto ran up and down the Forum, through the halls of the Coliseum, and from the triumphal arch of Constantine to the



## Ekkehard

four-faced Janus near the Tiber, seeking for his sister and not finding her, and on the morning of the fourth day, she walked in by the Salarian gate, carrying her head very high, and while her eyes gleamed strangely she said that things would not be right in the world until the due amount of veneration was shown unto St. Martin.

After returning to her home, she bequeathed all her wealth to the bishop's church at Constance, on condition that a great festival in honor of St. Martin should be held every year on the 11th of November. Then she went to live in a small house where the holy Zilia had lived before, and there led a hermit's life, until she grew dissatisfied, and betook herself to the valley of St. Gallus. The bishop himself accompanied her, put the black veil on her head with his own hands, and after leading her into the cell, he laid the first stone with which the entrance was closed up. Then he pronounced his blessing, imprinting his seal four times into the lead which joined the stones together, while the monks who had accompanied him chanted sad, solemn strains, as if some one was being buried.

The people thereabout held the recluse in great honor. They called her a "hard-forged Saint," and on many a Sunday they flocked to the meadow before her cell, and listened to Wiborad, who stood preaching at her window, and several women went

## Ekkehard

to live in her neighborhood, to be instructed in all the virtues.

"We have arrived at the place of our destination," said Romeias, upon which Praxedis and her companions looked about in every direction, but not a human being was to be seen. Only some belated butterflies and beetles buzzed drowsily in the sunshine and the cricket chirped merrily, hidden in the grass. The shutter at Wiborad's window was almost closed, so that but a scanty ray of sunshine could penetrate; and from within came the monotonous hollow tones of a person chanting psalms, with a somewhat nasal sound, breaking the silence without. Romeias knocked against the shutter with his spear, but this had no effect on the psalm-chanting individual inside. Then the gate-keeper said: "We must try some other way of rousing her attention."

Romeias was rather a rough sort of man, or he would not have behaved as he did.

He began singing a song, such as he often sang to amuse the cloister pupils, when they managed to steal off into his watch-tower, there to plague him by pulling his beard or by making all sorts of absurd noises on his big horn. It was one of those ditties which from the time that the German tongue was first spoken have been sung by the thousand on hills and highroads, under hedges and in woody dells, and the wind has carried them on

## Ekkehard

and spread them farther. The words of this were as follows:

"I know an oak-tree fair to see,  
In yonder shady grove;  
There bills and coos the livelong day  
A beautiful wild dove.

"I know a rock in yonder vale,  
Around which bats are flitting;  
There, old and hoary in her nest,  
An ugly owl is sitting.

"The wild dove is my heart's delight,  
And with a song I greet it;  
The arrow keep I for the owl,  
To kill it when I meet it."

This song had about the same effect as if Romeias had thrown a heavy stone against the shutter. Instantly there appeared at the little window a figure, from the withered and scraggy neck of which rose a ghastly female face, the mouth assuming a rather hostile position toward the nose. A dark veil hid the rest, and bending out of the little window as far as she could, she cried out with ominously gleaming eyes: "Art thou come back, Satan?"

Romeias then advanced a few steps and said complacently: "Nay, the Evil One does not know

## Ekkehard

such fine songs as Romeias, the monastery's gate-keeper. Calm yourself, Sister Wiborad, I bring you some dainty damsels, whom the Abbot warmly recommends to your kind reception."

"Take yourselves off, ye deceiving phantoms!" screamed the recluse. "I know the snares of the Tempter. Hence, begone!"

But Praxedis now approached the window, and, humbly dropping a low curtsy to the old hag, explained to her that she did not come from hell, but from the Hohentwiel. As an example of her occasional deceitfulness, the Greek maiden added that she had already heard so much of the great piety of the far-famed Sister Wiborad that she had availed herself of the first opportunity of paying her a visit, though the fact was that she had before that day never heard about the cell and its inhabitant.

After this the wrinkles on Wiborad's forehead began to soften a little. "Give me thy hand, stranger," said she, stretching her arm out of the window, which, as the sleeve fell back, could be seen in all its skinny leanness.

Praxedis held up her right hand, and as the recluse touched with her dry fingers the soft warm hand with its throbbing pulses, she became slowly convinced that the young girl was a being of flesh and blood.

Romeias, on perceiving this change for the bet-

## Ekkehard

ter, rolled some big stones under the window of the cell. "In two hours I shall be back to fetch you. God bless you, virgins all," he said aloud, and then added in a whisper to the Greek maid, "And don't be frightened if she should fall into one of her trances."

Whistling to his dogs he then quickly strode toward the wood. The first thirty steps or so he got on without any impediment; but then he suddenly stopped; and turning first his shaggy head round, and then the whole body, he stood leaning on his spear, intently gazing at the spot before the cell, as if he had lost something there. Yet he had forgotten nothing.

Praxedis smiled and kissed her hand to the rudest of all gatekeepers. Then Romeias quickly turned round again, shouldered his spear, dropped it, took it up again, then stumbled, and finally managed to complete his retreat, after which he vanished behind the moss-grown stems.

"Oh, thou child of the world, groping in darkness," scolded the recluse, "what meant that movement of thy hand?"

"A mere jest," replied Praxedis, innocently.

"A downright sin," cried Wiborad in rough accents, so that Praxedis started; and then, continuing with her preaching, added: "Oh, the Devil's works and delusions! There you cast your eyes slyly about until they enter a man's heart like light-

## Ekkehard

ning, and kiss your hands to him as if that were nothing! Is it naught that he looks back who ought to be looking forward? No man having put his hand to the plow, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God. 'A jest?' Oh, give me hyssop to take away your sin, and snow to wash you clean!"

"I did not think of that," admitted Praxedis, deeply blushing.

"That is the misery, that you do not think of so many things." Then looking at Praxedis from head to foot, she continued: "Neither do you think that wearing a bright green garment and all such flaring colors are an abomination unto those who have banished all worldly thoughts; and that thy girdle is tied so loosely and negligently round thy waist, as if thou wert a public dancer. Watch and pray!"

Leaving the window for a few moments, the recluse returned presently, and held out a coarsely twisted cord.

"I have pity on thee, poor turtle-dove," she said. "Tear off thy silken finery and receive herewith the girdle of self-denial from Wiborad's own hand; and let it be a warning to thee to have done with all vain talkings and doings. And when thou feelest the temptation again to kiss thy hand to the gatekeeper of a monastery, turn thy head eastward and chant the psalm, 'O Lord, deliver me from

## Ekkehard

evil! And if even then peace will not come to thee, then light a wax-candle and hold thy forefinger over the flame, and thou wilt be saved; for fire alone cures fire."

Praxedis cast down her eye.

"Your words are bitter," she said.

"Bitter!" exclaimed the recluse. "Praised be the Lord that my lips do not taste of sweets! The mouth of saints must be bitter. When Pachomius sat in the desert, the angel of the Lord came unto him, took the leaves from a laurel-tree, and writing some holy words of prayer thereon, gave them to Pachomius and said: 'Swallow these leaves, and though they will be as bitter as gall in thy mouth, they will make thy heart overflow with true wisdom.' And Pachomius took the leaves and ate them, and from that moment his tongue became bitter, but his heart was filled with sweetness, and he praised the Lord."

Praxedis said nothing, and there ensued a silence which was not interrupted for some time. The other maids of the Duchess had all vanished, for when the recluse had handed out her girdle, they nudged each other and then quietly glided away. They were now gathering bunches of heather and other autumnal flowers, giggling at what they had witnessed.

"Shall we also put on such a belt?" said one of them.

## Ekkehard

"Yes, when the sun rises black," replied the other.

Praxedis had put the cord into the grass.

"I do not like robbing you of your girdle," she now said shyly.

"Oh, what simplicity!" exclaimed Wiborad. "The girdle that we wear is no child's play like the one that I gave thee. The girdle of Wiborad is an iron hoop with blunted spikes. It clinks like a chain and cuts into the flesh. Thou wouldst shudder at the mere sight of it."

Praxedis gazed toward the wood, as if spying whether Romeias was not yet to be seen. The recluse probably noticed that her guest did not feel particularly comfortable, and now held out to her a board, on which lay about half a dozen of reddish-green crab-apples.

"Does the time pass slowly for thee, child of the world?" she said. "There, take these, if words of grace do not satisfy thee. Cakes and sweetmeats have I none, but these apples are fair in the sight of the Lord. They are the nourishment of the poor."

The Greek maid knew what politeness required. But they were crab-apples, and after having with an effort swallowed half of one, her pretty mouth looked awry, and involuntarily tears started into her eyes.

"How dost thou like them?" cried the recluse.



## Ekkehard

Then Praxedis feigned as if the remaining half fell by chance from her hand. "If the Creator had made all apples as acid as these," she said with a sour-sweet smile, "Eve would never have eaten of the apple."

Wiborad was offended. "'Tis well," said she, "that thou dost not forget the story of Eve. She had the same tastes as thou, and therefore sin has come into the world."

The Greek maid looked up at the sky, but not from emotion. A solitary hawk flew in circles over Wiborad's hut. "Oh, that I could fly with thee, away to the Bodensee," she thought. Archly shaking her pretty head, she then inquired: "What must I do to become as perfect as you are?"

"To renounce the world entirely," replied Wiborad, "is a grace from above which we poor mortals can not acquire by ourselves. Fasting, drinking of pure water, castigating the flesh and reciting of psalms—all these are mere preparations. The most important thing is to select a good patron saint. We women are but frail creatures, but fervent prayer brings the champions of God to our side to assist us. Imagine, before this little window there he often stands in lonely nights—he, whom my heart has elected, the valiant St. Martin, and he holds out his lance and shield to protect me from the raging devils. An aureole of blue flames crowns his head, flashing through the darkness like

## Ekkehard

summer lightning, and as soon as he appears the demons fly away shrieking. And when the battle is over, then he enters into friendly communion with me. I tell him all that weighs on my poor heart; all the grief which my neighbors cause me, and the wrong which I suffer from the cloister-folk; and the Saint nods to me and shakes his curly head, and all that I tell him he carries to heaven and repeats it to his friend the Archangel Michael, who keeps watch every Monday before the throne of God Almighty. There it comes before the right ear, and Wiborad, the last of the least, is not forgotten. . . ."

"Then I shall also choose St. Martin to become my patron saint," exclaimed Praxedis. But this had not been the intention of Wiborad's praises. She threw a contemptuous, half-jealous look on the rosy cheeks of the young girl. "The Lord pardon thee thy presumption!" cried she with folded hands. "Dost thou believe that this can be done with flippant word and smooth face?. Indeed! Many long years have I striven and fasted until my face became wrinkled and furrowed, and he did not favor me even with one single look! He is a high and mighty Saint and a valiant soldier of the Lord, who only looks on long-tried champions."

"He will not rudely shut his ears against my prayers," exclaimed Praxedis.

## Ekkehard

"But thou shalt not pray to him," cried Wiborad angrily. "What has he to do with thee? For such as thou art there are other patron saints. I will name thee one. Choose thou the pious Father Pachomius for thyself."

"Him I don't know," said Praxedis.

"Bad enough, and it is high time for you to make his acquaintance. He was a venerable hermit who lived in the Theban desert, nourishing himself with wild roots and locusts. He was so pious that he heard during his lifetime the harmony of the spheres and planets, and often said: 'If all human beings would hear what has blessed my ears, they would forsake house and land; and he who had put on the right shoe would leave the left one behind and hasten thither.' Now in the town of Alexandria there was a maid whose name was Thaïs, and nobody could tell which was greater, her beauty or her frivolity. Then Pachomius said unto himself, 'Such a woman is a plague for the whole Egyptian land;' and after cutting his beard and anointing himself he mounted a crocodile, which by prayer he had made subservient to himself, and on its scaly back was carried down the Nile; and then he went to Thaïs, as if he also were an admirer of hers. His big stick, which was a palm-tree, he had taken with him, and he managed to shake the heart of the sinner so as to make her burn her silken robes, as well as her jewels, and

## Ekkehard

she followed Pachomius, as a lamb does the shepherd. Then he shut her up in a rocky grave, leaving only a tiny window in it; instructed her in prayer, and after five years her purification was completed, and four angels carried her soul up to heaven."

This story did not impress Praxedis very favorably.

"The old hermit with his rough beard and bitter lips is not good enough for her," she thought, "and therefore I am to take him for myself," but she did not dare to give utterance to these thoughts.

At this moment the curfew bell began to ring in the monastery, and at this signal the recluse stepped back into her chamber and closed her shutter. The hollow sound of psalm-chanting was heard again, accompanied by the noise of falling strokes.

Wiborad was flagellating herself.

Meanwhile Romeias had begun his sport in the distant wood, and thrown his spear; but he had mistaken the trunk of a felled oak for a young deer. Angrily he pulled out his weapon from the tenacious wood. It was the first time in his life that such a thing had happened to him.

Before Wiborad's cell total silence reigned for a considerable length of time, and when her voice was again heard, it was quite altered; the tones being fuller and vibrating with passion: "Come

## Ekkehard

down unto me, holy Martin; valiant champion of God; thou consolation of my solitude; thou light in my darkness. Descend unto me, for my soul is ready to receive thee and my eyes are thirsting for thee."

After this there ensued a pause, and then Praxedis started with terror. A hollow shriek had come from within. She pushed open the shutter and looked in. The recluse was prostrated on her knees, her arms extended beseechingly, and her eyes had a fixed, stony expression. Beside her lay the scourge.

"For God's sake," cried Praxedis, "what is the matter with you?"

Wiborad jumped up and pressed the hand which the Greek maid extended to her convulsively. "Child of Earth," said she in broken accents, "who hast been deemed worthy to witness the agonies of Wiborad, strike thy bosom, for a token has been given. He, the elected of my soul has not come; offended that his name has been profaned by unholy lips; but the holy Gallus has appeared to my soul's eye—he who as yet has never deigned to visit my cell, and his countenance was that of a sufferer, and his garments were torn and half burned. That means that his monastery is threatened by some great disaster. We must pray that his disciples may not stumble in the path of righteousness."

## Ekkehard

Bending her head out of the window, she called out, "Sister Wendelgard!"

Then the shutter was opened on the opposite cell and an aged face appeared. The face belonged to good Dame Wendelgard, in mourning for her spouse, who had never returned from the last wars.

"Sister Wendelgard," said Wiborad, "let us sing three times 'Be merciful to us, O Lord.'"

But the Sister Wendelgard had just been indulging in loving thoughts of her noble spouse. She still harbored an unalterable conviction that some day he would return to her from the land of the Huns, and she would have liked best there and then to leave her cell to go and meet him.

"It is not the time for psalm-singing," she replied.

"So much the more acceptable will be the voluntary devotion that rises up to Heaven," said Wiborad, after which she intoned the said psalm with her rough unmelodious voice. But the expected reponse did not come. "Why dost thou not join me in singing David's song?"

"Because I don't wish to," was Sister Wendelgard's unceremonious reply. The fact was, that during the many years of her seclusion she had at last grown weary of it. Many thousand psalms had she sung at Wiborad's bidding, in order to induce St. Martin to deliver her husband out of the hands of the infidels; but the sun rose and set daily,

## Ekkehard

and yet he never came. And so she had begun to dislike her gaunt neighbor, with her visions and phantasms.

Wiborad, however, turned her eyes upward, like one who thinks he can discover a comet in clear daylight. "Oh, thou vessel full of iniquity and wickedness!" she cried, "I will pray for thee, that the evil spirits may be banished from thee. Thine eye is blind as thy mind is dark."

But the other quietly replied: "Judge not, that thou be not judged. My eyes are as clear as they were a year ago, when on a moonlight night they beheld you getting out of your window, and going away Heaven knows where; and my mind still refuses to believe that prayers coming from such a mouth can work miracles."

Then Wiborad's pale face became distorted, as if she had bitten a pebble. "Woe to thee, whom the Devil has deluded!" screamed she, and a flood of scalding words streamed from her lips; but her neighbor knew well how to answer her with similar missiles.

Quicker and quicker the words came, confused and involved, while the rocky walls threw back inharmonious echoes, and frightened a pair of little owlets, which, leaving their lofty nest, flew away screeching.

In mute astonishment Praxedis stood listening to the noise, secretly wishing to interfere and make

## Ekkehard

peace; but then a soft thing fares ill between two sharp ones.

But now the merry notes of a horn, intermingled with the loud barking of dogs, was heard from the wood, and a moment later the tall majestic figure of Romeias could be seen also, approaching slowly.

The second time that he had thrown the spear it had not hit a tree, but a magnificent stag of ten antlers, which now hung over his shoulder; and besides this he carried fastened to his belt six hares which had been caught in snares.

On beholding the fight before him, the sportsman's heart rejoiced mightily. Without saying a word, he loosened two of the living hares, and swinging one in each hand, he threw them so dexterously into the narrow little windows that Wiborad, suddenly feeling the soft fur brushing past her head, started back with a loud scream. The brave Sister Wendelgar likewise got a great shock, for her black habit had loosened itself in the heat of battle, and the wretched little hare, getting entangled therein, and trying to discover an outlet, caused her no small fright. So both stopped their scolding, closed the shutters, and there was silence again on the Hill of Erin.

"We'll go home," said Romeias to the Greek maid, "for it is getting late." Praxedis, who was not overpleased, either by the quarreling or Ro-



## Ekkehard

meias's way of making peace, had no desire to stay any longer. Her companions had gone back some time ago, following their own inclinations.

"Hares must be of small value here, as you throw them away in such an unmannerly fashion," she said.

"True, they are not worth much," Romeias rejoined laughingly, "yet the present deserved thanks at least."

While still speaking, the dormer-window of Wiborad's roof opened; about half of her gaunt, lean figure became visible, and a stone of some weight flew over Romeias's head, without hitting him. That was her way of thanking him for the hare.

From this can be seen that the forms of social intercourse differed somewhat from present methods.

Praxedis expressed her astonishment.

"Oh, such things happen about once a week," explained Romeias. "A moderate overflow of gall gives new strength to such old hags, and it is doing them a kindness if one helps them to effect such a crisis."

"But she is a saint," said Praxedis shyly.

After first murmuring some unintelligible words in his beard, Romeias said: "Well, she ought to be thankful if she is one, and I am not going to tear off her garb of sanctity. But when I was at Constance on a visit to my mother, I heard many a tale

## Ekkehard

that's not quite as it ought to be. It has not yet been forgotten in those parts how she had to defend herself before the bishop on account of this and that, which is none of my business; and the Constance merchants will tell you, without your asking them, that the recluses near the cathedral have lent them money, given to them by pious pilgrims, on usurious interest. It was not my fault that once, when I was still a boy, I found a strange big pebble in a quarry. When I knocked it to pieces with my hammer, there was a toad in the middle, looking very much astonished. Since then I know what a recluse is like. Snip-snap—trari-trara!"

Romeias accompanied his new friend to the house which lay beyond the cloister-walls and which was destined to receive her. Before it the other maids were standing, and the posy of wild flowers they had gathered lay on a stone table before the door.

"We must say good-by," said the gatekeeper.

"Farewell," said Praxedis.

He then went away, and after going thirty steps suddenly turned round—but the sun does not rise twice in one day, least of all for the keeper of a cloister-gate! No hand was being kissed to him. Praxedis had entered the house. Then Romeias slowly walked back, and, without troubling himself to ask leave, hastily took up the flowers from the

## Ekkehard

stone table, and went away. The stag and four hares he brought to the kitchen. After this he toiled up to his room in the watch-tower, fastened the nosegay to the wall with the help of a nail, and, taking a piece of charcoal, drew a heart under it, which had two eyes, a long stroke in lieu of a nose, and a cross-line for a mouth.

He had just finished this when the cloister pupil Burkhard came up, bent upon amusing himself. Romeias seized him with a powerful grasp, held out the charcoal, and, placing him before the wall, said: "There, write the name under it!"

"What name?" asked the boy.

"Hers," commanded Romeias.

"What do I know about her and her name?" testily replied the pupil.

"There, one sees again what the use of studying is," grumbled Romeias. "Every day the boy sits for eight hours behind his asses'-skins and can not know the name of a strange damsel!"

# Ekkehard

## CHAPTER IV

### IN THE MONASTERY

DAME HADWIG had meanwhile performed her devotions at the grave of the holy Gallus. The Abbot was then about to propose a walk in the cloister-garden, but she asked him first to show her the treasures of the church. The mind of woman, however intellectual, ever delights in ornaments, jewels, and fine garments. The Abbot tried hard to dissuade her from this wish, saying that theirs was but a poor little monastery, and that his cousin, no doubt, had seen far better things on her travels or at court, but it was all in vain. So they went to the sacristy. Here the cupboards were first opened, revealing many purple chasubles and magnificent priest's garments, with embroidered pictures, representations of the holy history. Here and there was also some piece strongly reminding one of Roman heathenism, such as the marriage of Mercury with Philology. When the cupboards were disposed of, large boxes were opened, full of silver lamps, golden crowns, finely wrought frames for the holy books, and ornaments for the altar. These

## Ekkehard

things had mostly been brought over the Alps by monks, who, tying them round their knees, had thus slyly preserved them from covetous eyes and hands. Beautiful vessels in all sorts of curious forms; candlesticks in the shape of dolphins; golden drinking-cups resting on silver pillars; censers and many other beautiful articles—altogether a rich treasure. A chalice made of a single piece of amber, which glistened wonderfully when held to the light, attracted the Duchess's notice. At the edge a small piece was broken off.

"When my predecessor Hartmuth was dying," said the Abbot, "that little bit was powdered and given to him, mixed with wine and honey, to calm the fever."

In the middle of the amber was a tiny fly, as well preserved as if it had but just settled down there. Probably the little insect, sitting contentedly on its blade of grass in antediluvian times, when the liquid resin streamed over it, little thought that it would thus be bequeathed to far-off generations.

But such dumb testimonials of nature's powers were little heeded then. At least the chamberlain Spazzo, who surveyed and examined everything with a careful eye, was occupied the while with very different ideas. He thought how much pleasanter it would be to be at war with the pious monks, and, instead of claiming their hospitality as a friend,

## Ekkehard

to enter, arms in hand, and carry all the treasures away. Having witnessed in his time many a reverse of friendship between the high-born, he was inwardly speculating on this possibility, and, eyeing keenly the entrance to the sacristy, he murmured to himself: "Coming from the choir 'tis the first door to the right!"

The Abbot, who probably thought likewise that the prolonged examination of the gold and silver produced a hankering for their possession, slyly omitted opening the last box, which contained the most magnificent things of all, and in order to divert their attention from them urgently proposed their going into the open air.

So the party directed their steps toward the garden, which occupied a considerable space, and produced many vegetables and fruits for the kitchen, as well as useful herbs for medicines.

In the orchard a large portion was divided off and reserved for wild animals and numerous birds, such as were to be found in the neighboring Alps; and rarer ones which had been sent as presents, by stranger guests from foreign countries.

Dame Hadwig took great pleasure in looking at the rough, uncouth bears, which were funny enough when climbing about on the tree in their prison. Close to these, two monkeys, chained together, played their merry antics—two creatures of which a poet of that time said that neither one

## Ekkehard

nor the other possessed a single trace of the faculty of making itself useful enough to establish a claim to its existence.

An old wild goat with bent-down head stood motionless within its narrow pen, for since being carried off from the icy atmosphere of its snowy mountain peaks and glaciers, this native of the Alps had become blind—for it is not every creature that can thrive amid low-lying human habitations.

In another division a large family of thick-skinned badgers was living. On passing them the evil Sindolt exclaimed laughingly: "Heaven bless you miserable little beasts, the chosen game of pious monks."

On another side was heard a shrill whistle from a troop of marmots, which were running quickly to hide themselves in the chinks and crevices of the artificial rockery that served as their dwelling. Dame Hadwig had never beheld such amusing little creatures before. The Abbot told her of their way of living.

"These animals," said he, "sleep more than any other creature; but when awake they show a wonderful sharpness and forethought, for when winter approaches they gather up grass and hay wherever they find it, and one of them lies down on its back, while the others put on it everything they have scraped together, and then they seize it by

## Ekkehard

the tail, and drag it like a loaded cart into their caverns.

Then Sindolt said to the stout chamberlain, Master Spazzo: "What a pity that you have not become a mountain-rat; that would have been a pleasant and graceful occupation for you."

When the Abbot had proceeded a few paces, the evil Sindolt began to give a new sort of explanation: "That is our Tutilo," said he, pointing to a bear, which had just thrown down one of its companions; "that the blind Thieto"—pointing to the wild goat—and he was just about to honor the Abbot with some flattering comparison, when the Duchess interrupted him by saying: "As you are so clever in finding similes, will you find one for me also?"

Sindolt became embarrassed. Luckily his eye now fell on a beautiful silver-pheasant, which was in the midst of a troop of cranes, basking in the sunshine which lighted up its pearly gray feathers.

"There," said Sindolt.

But the Duchess turned round to Ekkehard, who gazed dreamily at the bustle and life before him.

"What do you think of it?" asked she.

He started up. "Oh, mistress!" said he in soft tones, "who is so audacious as to compare you to anything that flies or crawls?"

"But if we desire it?"

"Then I only know of one bird," said Ekkehard.



## Ekkehard

"We have not got it, nor has any one; in starlit nights it flies high over our heads, brushing the sky with its wings. The bird's name is Caradrion, and when its wings touch the earth a sick man is healed. Then the bird, inclining toward the man, opens its beak over his mouth, and taking the man's sickness unto itself rises up to the sun, and purifies itself in the eternal light; and the man is saved."

The Abbot's return put a stop to further similes. One of the serving brothers was sitting in an apple-tree, plucking the apples, and putting them into baskets. When the Duchess approached the tree, he was going to descend, but she made him a sign to stop where he was.

Now, the singing of sweet boyish voices was heard. The voices were those of the younger cloister-pupils who came to do homage to the Duchess. Children as they were, the little fellows already wore the monastic habit, and several even the tonsure on their eleven-year-old heads. When the procession of the little rosy-cheeked future abbots came in sight, with their eyes cast down and singing their sequences so seriously, a slight, mocking smile played round Dame Hadwig's lips, and with her strong foot she upset the nearest of the baskets, so that the apples rolled about enticingly on the ground, in the midst of the boys. But unabashed they continued their walk; only one of the youngest wanted to bend down and take up the tempting

## Ekkehard

fruit, which his companion forcibly prevented, by taking a good hold of his girdle.

Much pleased the Abbot witnessed the young folks' excellent behavior and said: "Discipline distinguishes human beings from animals, and if you were to throw the apples of Hesperides among them, they would remain steadfast."

Dame Hadwig was touched. "Are all your pupils so well trained?" asked she.

"If you like to convince yourself with your own eyes," said the Abbot, "you will see that the elder ones know quite as well the meaning of obedience and submission."

The Duchess, nodding an assent, was then led into the outer cloister-school, in which the sons of noblemen, and those who intended to join the secular clergy, were educated.

They entered the upper class. In the lecturer's chair stood Ratpert, the wise and learned teacher, who was initiating his pupils into the mysteries of Aristotle's logic. With bent heads the young scholars sat before their parchments, scarcely lifting their eyes to look at the party now entering. The teacher inwardly thought this a good opportunity to gather some laurels, and called out: "Notker Labeo!" This was the pearl among his pupils, the hope of science, who on a weakly body carried a powerful head, with an immense protruding nether lip, the cause of his surname, the symbol of

## Ekkehard

great determination and perseverance on the stony roads of investigation.

"He will become a great man," whispered the Abbot. "Already in his twelfth year he said that the world was like a book, and that the monasteries were the classical passages in it."

The young man in question let his eyes glide over the Greek text, and then translated with pompous solemnity the deep, intricate meaning thereof:

"If on a stone or piece of wood you find a straight line running through, that is the mutual line of demarcation of the even surface. If the stone or wood were to split along that line, then we should behold two intersections, near the visible chink, where there was only one line before. Besides this we see two new surfaces, which are as broad as the object was thick, before one could see the new surface. From this it appears that this object existed as a whole before it was divided."

But when this translation had been well got through, some of the young logicians put their heads together, and began to whisper, and the whispers became louder and louder—even the cloister-pupil Hepidan, who, undisturbed by Notker's capital translation, was employing all his skill to carve a devil with a double pair of wings, and a long curling tail, on the bench before him, stopped with his work. Then the teacher addressed the next boy, with the question: "But how does the

## Ekkehard

surface become a mutual line of demarcation?" upon which he began to blunder over the Greek text; but the commotion in the school-benches became louder still, so that there arose a buzzing and booming like distant alarm-bells. The translation ceased altogether and suddenly the whole mass of Ratpert's pupils rushed up noisily, toward the Duchess. In the next moment they had torn her from the Abbot's side, shouting "Caught, caught," and, making barricades with the benches, they repeated their cries: "We have caught the Duchess of Suabia! What shall be her ransom?"

Dame Hadwig, in the course of her life, had found herself in various positions, but that she could ever become the prisoner of schoolboys had certainly never entered her head. This having, however, the charm of novelty for her, she submitted to her fate with a good grace.

Ratpert the teacher took out of the cupboard a mighty rod, and swinging it over his head, like a second Neptune, he recited, in a thundering voice, the verses of Virgil:

"So far has the conceit in your pitiful powers decoyed you,  
That, not awaiting my will, and rousing the heavens and  
waters,  
Ye have ventured to stir, ye rebellious winds of the  
ocean?  
*Quos ego!*"

## Ekkehard

A renewed shout was the answer. The room was already divided by a wall of benches and stools, and Master Spazzo was inwardly meditating the expediency of an attack, and the effect of vigorous blows on the heads of the ringleaders. As for the Abbot, he was perfectly speechless, as this unexpected audacity had quite paralyzed his faculties for the moment. The high-born prisoner stood at the other end of the schoolroom, in a niche, surrounded by her fifteen-year-old captors.

"What is the meaning of all this, you wicked boys?" asked she, smilingly.

Then one of the rebels advanced, bent his knee before her and humbly said: "He who comes as a stranger is without protection or peace, and peaceless people are kept prisoners, until they have paid a ransom for their liberty."

"Do you learn that out of your Greek books?"

"No, mistress, that is German law."

"Very well, then I will ransom myself," said Dame Hadwig, and laughing merrily she seized the red-cheeked logician, and drawing him toward her attempted to kiss him. He, however, tore himself away, and joining the noisy ranks of his companions cried out:

"That coin we do not understand!"

"What ransom do you exact then?" asked the Duchess, who was fast getting impatient.

"The Bishop of Constance was also our pris-

## Ekkehard

oner," replied the pupil, "and he obtained for us three additional holidays in the year, as well as a feast of bread and meat, and has further secured this to us with his name and seal."

"Oh gluttonous youth!" said Dame Hadwig. "Then I must at least do as much for you as the bishop. Have you ever tasted the Bodensee carp?"

"No!" cried the boys.

"Then you shall receive six fish as an annual present. This fish is good for young beaks."

"Do you secure this to us with your name and seal?"

"If it must be so, yes."

"Long life to the Duchess of Suabia! All hail!" was now shouted on all sides. "Hail! she is free." The school-benches were quickly removed, the passage cleared, and jumping and shouting triumphantly they led back their prisoner.

In the background the parchment leaves of Aristotle flew up into the air, as outward signs of joy. Even the corners of Notker Labeo's mouth turned down into a broad grin, and Dame Hadwig said: "The young gentlemen were very gracious. Please to put back the rod into the cupboard, honored professor."

A continuation of the translation of Aristotle was not to be thought of. Who can tell whether the uproarious outbreak of the pupils was not in close connection with their study of logic? Seri-

## Ekkehard

ousness is often a very dry and leafless trunk; else folly would scarcely find room to wind her wanton green-leafed tendrils around it. . . .

When the Duchess, accompanied by the Abbot, had left the schoolroom, the latter said: "There is nothing now left to show you but the library of the monastery, the well for thirsty souls, the armory with its weapons of science." But Dame Hadwig was tired, and so declined his offer.

"I must keep my word," said she, "and make the donation to your boys documental. Will you be pleased to have the parchment got ready, that I may affix my signature and seal."

Sir Cralo conducted his guest to his apartments. On going along the cross-passage, they passed a small room, the door of which was open. Close to the bare wall stood a pillar, from the middle of which hung a chain. Over the portal, in faded colors, was painted a figure which held a rod in its lean hand. "Him whom the Lord loveth, he chastiseth," was written under it in capital letters.

Dame Hadwig cast an inquiring look at the Abbot.

"The scourging room!" replied he.

"Is none of the brothers just now liable to punishment?" asked she; "it might be a warning example."

Then the evil Sindolt's feet twitched as if he had trodden on a thorn. He turned round as if

## Ekkehard

he had been attracted by a voice calling to him, and exclaiming, "I am coming," he quickly vanished into the darker parts of the passage. He well knew why he did so.

Notker, the stutterer, after the labor of years, had at last completed a psalm-book, adorned with dainty drawings. This book the envious Sindolt had destroyed at night; cutting it to pieces, and upsetting a jug of wine over it. On account of this he had been sentenced to be flogged three times, and the last instalment was still due. He knew the room and the instruments of penance hanging on the walls well enough, from the nine-tailed "scorpion" down to the simple "wasp."

The Abbot hurried on. His rooms of state were richly decorated with flowers. Dame Hadwig threw herself into the primitive armchair, to rest from the fatigue of all the sight-seeing. She had received many new impressions within the space of a few hours. There was still half an hour left before supper.

Had any one taken the trouble to visit all the cloister-cells, he might have satisfied himself that not a single inhabitant thereof had remained unaffected by the arrival of the high-born guests. Even men who pass their lives in complete seclusion feel that they owe homage to woman.

The hoary Tutilo had remembered with a pang, on the arrival of the Duchess, that the left sleeve



## Ekkehard

of his habit was adorned with a hole. Under ordinary circumstances the sleeve would probably have remained unpatched until the next great festival, but now there was no time for delay. So he sat down on his couch, provided with needle and thread, busily mending the rent. Being once busy with such things he also put new soles to his sandals; fastening them with nails, and humming a tune to speed the work. Ratold, the thinker, walked up and down in his cell, with a deep frown on his forehead, hoping that an opportunity would present itself to praise the virtues of the high-born guest in an improvised speech, and to heighten the effect of the spontaneous effusion he was studying it beforehand. He intended to take the following lines of Tacitus, "On the Germans," for a text: "They believe also that there is something holy about women, and that they have the gift of seeing into the future. Therefore they never disdain the advice given by them, and often follow their warnings." This was about all that he knew of the other sex, but his squirrel-eyes twinkled with the hope of being able, from the praise of the Duchess, easily to diverge to some spiteful criticism on his brethren. Unfortunately the opportunity to bring in his speech never came, or he did not know how to seize it.

In another cell six of the brothers sat under the huge ivory comb, which was suspended by an

## Ekkehard

iron chain from the ceiling. This was a very useful institution established by Abbot Hartmuth. Murmuring the prescribed prayers, they assisted one another in the careful arrangement of each other's hair. Many an overgrown tonsure was also restored to a shining smoothness on that day.

While these things were going on in the monastery itself, no less activity was displayed in the kitchen under the superintendence of Gerold, the steward. And now resounded the tinkling of that bell, the sounds of which were not heard without a pleasurable sensation even by the most pious of the brethren, as it was the signal for the evening meal. Abbot Cralo led the Duchess into the refectory. The large room was divided in the middle by nine pillars, and around fourteen covered tables the members of the monastery, priests and deacons, stood assembled, like champions of the church militant. These, however, did not pay any great attention to the noble guest.

The duty of reader for that week before the meals had to be performed by Ekkehard, the custodian. In honor of the Duchess he had chosen the 45th Psalm. He arose and said: "O Lord, open my lips, that my mouth may speak forth Thy praise," and all repeated these words in a low murmur, as a sort of blessing on his reading.

After that he lifted his voice and began reciting the psalm, which Scripture itself calls a lovely one.

## Ekkehard

“My heart is inditing a good matter: I speak of the things which I have made touching the king: my tongue is the pen of a ready writer.

“Thou art fairer than the children of men: grace is poured into thy lips: therefore God hath blessed thee for ever.

“Gird thy sword upon thy thigh, O most mighty, with thy glory and thy majesty.

“And in thy majesty ride prosperously because of truth and meekness and righteousness. . . .

“Thine arrows are sharp in the heart of the king's enemies; whereby the people fall under thee.

“Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever: the sceptre of thy kingdom is a right sceptre.

“Thou lovest righteousness, and hatest wickedness: therefore God, thy God, hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness above thy fellows.

“All thy garments smell of myrrh, and aloes, and cassia. . . .”

The Duchess seemed to understand the latent homage and as if she herself was being addressed in the words of the psalm, she fastened her eyes intently on Ekkehard. But the Abbot likewise had noticed this, and made a sign to interrupt the reading; and thus the psalm remained unfinished, and every one sat down to supper.

Sir Cralo could not, however, prevent Dame Hadwig's ordering the zealous reader to sit down by her side. According to rank, this seat on her

## Ekkehard

left side, had been destined for the old dean Gozbert; but he for the last few minutes had been sitting on thorns; for he had once indulged in a very rough-spoken dispute with Dame Hadwig's late husband, at the time when the latter carried off the precious chalice, as a war contribution. On that account he had also a grudge against the Duchess, and had no sooner remarked her intention, than he gladly moved downward, and pushed the custodian into his seat. Next to Ekkehard came Spazzo the chamberlain, and after him the monk Sindolt.

The meal began. The steward, well knowing that the arrival of strange guests fully sanctioned an enlargement of the accustomed frugal cloister-fare, had not restricted himself to the ordinary porridge. The strict bill of fare of the late Abbot Hartmuth was also not adhered to.

To be sure, there appeared first a steaming dish of millet-porridge, that those who preferred strictly to adhere to the prescribed rule might satisfy their hunger; but after that, one delicacy followed another in quick succession. Side by side with the roast stag stood the delicious bear's ham, and even the beaver of the upper pond, which had been deprived of life in honor of the occasion. Pheasants, partridges, turtle-doves, and a rich collection of smaller birds followed; as well as an immense quantity of fish of all descriptions, so that

## Ekkehard

finally every species of animal—crawling, flying, or swimming—that was good to eat, was represented on the table.

Many a one of the brothers fought a fierce battle within the depths of his heart on that day. Even Gozbert, the old dean, after having stilled the cravings of hunger with millet-porridge, and having pushed aside with a tremendous frown the roasted stag and bear's ham, as if it were a temptation of the Evil One, when a beautifully roasted grouse was put down before him, felt the odor thereof rise temptingly into his nostrils. And with the savory smell the memories of his youth came back; when he himself was a first-rate sportsman, fully two score years ago, and when he went out in the early morning to shoot the woodcock, and meet the gamekeeper's bright-eyed daughter; and twice he resisted the half involuntary movement of his arm, the third time he felt his strength going, and a moment after, one-half of the bird lay before him, and was hastily despatched.

Spazzo, the chamberlain, had watched with an approving nod the appearance of the many dishes. A large Rhine-salmon had quickly disappeared under his hands, and he now cast his eyes about in search of something to drink. Then Sindolt, his neighbor, seized a small stone jug, poured out its contents into a metal cup and said: "Your health in the choicest wine of the monastery."

## Ekkehard

Master Spazzo intended to take a copious draft, but scarcely had the liquid touched his palate, when he put down the goblet hastily, shaking all over as with the ague, and exclaimed: "Then may the Devil be friar!"

The evil Sindolt had given him a sour cider, made of crab-apples, and sweetened with the juice of the blackberry. On Master Spazzo's looking inclined to thank him by a blow, he quickly fetched a jug of the delicious red "Valtelliner," wherewith to soften his ire. The "Valtelliner" is a capital wine, in which formerly the Roman Emperor Augustus drowned his grief over the lost battle of Varus. By degrees Master Spazzo's good humor returned; so that without knowing him, he willingly drank to the health of the Bishop of Chur, to whom the monastery was indebted for this wine, and Sindolt did not fail to keep him company.

"What may your patron say to such drinking?" asked the chamberlain.

"St. Benedict was a wise man," replied Sindolt, "therefore he ordained, that although it had been written that wine was altogether no drink for monks, yet as not a single person, at the present day, could be persuaded of the justness of this observation, and in consequence of the weakness of the human mind, every one should be allowed a bottle a day. No one, however, is to drink to sa-

## Ekkehard

tiety, for wine will make even the wisest swerve from the path of wisdom."

"Good" said Spazzo, and drained his tumbler.

"On the other hand," continued Sindolt, "those of the brotherhood in whose district little or no wine grows must resign themselves, and praise the Lord without grumbling."

"Good also," said Spazzo, again emptying his goblet.

Meanwhile the Abbot did his best to entertain his ducal cousin. He first began to sing the praises of her late husband, Sir Burkhard, but Dame Hadwig's responses were but scanty and cold, so that the Abbot found out that everything has its time, especially the love of a widow for her late spouse. So he changed the conversation, asking her how the cloister-schools had pleased her.

"I feel sorry for the poor fellows, who are forced to learn so much in their early days," said the Duchess. "Is not that a burden for them under the weight of which they suffer all their lives?"

"Pardon me, noble cousin," replied the Abbot, "if both in the capacity of friend and relation I beg you not to indulge in such thoughtless speech. The study of science is no disagreeable obligation for the young; rather is it to them like strawberries, the more they eat the more they want."

"But what can they have to do with the heathen art of logic?" asked Dame Hadwig.

## Ekkehard

"That, in proper hands, becomes a weapon to protect God's church," said the Abbot. "With such arts heretics were wont to attack believers, but now we fight them with their own arms; and believe me, good Greek or Latin is a much finer instrument than our native language, which even in the hands of the ablest is but an unwieldy bludgeon."

"Indeed," said the Duchess, "must we still learn from you what is to be admired? I have existed until now without speaking the Latin tongue, Sir Cousin."

"It would not harm you if you were still to learn it," said the Abbot, "and when the first euphonious sounds of the Latin tongue shall have gladdened your ear, you will admit that, compared to it, our mother-tongue is but a young bear, which can neither stand nor walk well before it has been licked by a classical tongue. Besides, much wisdom flows from the mouths of the old Romans. Ask your neighbor to the left."

"Is it so?" asked Dame Hadwig, turning toward Ekkehard, who had silently listened to the foregoing conversation.

"It would be true, liege lady," said he enthusiastically, "if you still needed to learn wisdom."

Dame Hadwig archly held up her forefinger. "Have you yourself derived pleasure from those old parchments?"



## Ekkehard

"Both pleasure and happiness," exclaimed Ekkehard with beaming eyes. "Believe me, mistress, one does well to go to the classics for advice in all positions of life. Does not Cicero teach us to walk safely in the intricate paths of worldly prudence? Do we not gather confidence and courage from Livy and Sallust? Do not the songs of Virgil awaken us to the conception of imperishable beauty? The Gospel is the guiding-star of our faith; the old classics, however, have left a light behind them, which, like the glow of the evening sun, sends refreshment and joy into the hearts of men."

Ekkehard spoke with emotion. Since the day on which the old Duke Burkhard had asked her hand in marriage the Duchess had not seen any one who showed enthusiasm for anything. She was endowed with a high intellect, quick and imaginative. She had learned the Greek language very rapidly in the days of her youth, on account of the Byzantine proposal. Latin inspired her with a sort of awe, because unknown to her. Unknown things easily impress us, while knowledge leads us to judge things according to their real worth, which is often much less than we had expected. The name of Virgil besides had a certain magic about it.

In that hour the resolution was formed in Hadwig's heart to learn Latin. She had plenty of time

## Ekkehard

for this, and after having cast another look on her neighbor to the left, she knew who was to be her teacher.

The dainty dessert, consisting of peaches, melons, and dried figs, had vanished also, and the lively conversation at the different tables told of the frequent passing round of the wine-jug.

After the meal, in accordance with the rules of the order, a chapter out of the lives of the holy fathers had to be read, for general edification.

The day before, Ekkehard had begun a description of the life of St. Benedict, which had been written by Pope Gregory. The brothers drew the tables closer together; the wine-jug came to a dead stop, and all conversation was hushed. Ekkehard continued with the second chapter: "One day when he was alone, the Tempter approached him; for a small black bird, commonly called a crow, came and constantly flew around his head, and approaching so near that the holy man might have captured it with his hand. He, however, made the sign of the cross, and the bird flew away.

"No sooner, however, had the bird flown away than a fiercer temptation than the holy man had ever yet experienced assailed him. A considerable time before he had beheld a certain woman. This woman the Evil One caused to appear before his mental eyes, and to influence the heart of God's servant to such a degree that a devouring love

## Ekkehard

gnawed at his heart, and he almost resolved to leave his hermit life, so strong was the longing and desire within him.

“‘But at that moment a light from heaven shone on him, compelling him to return to his better self. And he beheld on one side a hedge of brambles and nettles. and he undressed and threw himself into the thorns and stinging nettles until his whole body was lacerated.

“‘And thus the wounds of the skin had healed the wound of the spirit, and having conquered sin he was saved. . . .’”

Dame Hadwig was not greatly edified by this lecture. She let her eyes wander about in the hall in search of something to divert her thoughts. Had the chamberlain, perhaps, also disapproved of the choice of the chapter, or had the wine got into his head? for suddenly he dashed at the book and closing it vehemently, so that the wooden covers clapped audibly, he held up his beaker, saying: “To the health of St. Benedict.” Ekkehard turned a reproachful look on him, but the younger members of the brotherhood, regarding the toast as serious, had already echoed it noisily. Here and there a hymn in praise of the holy man was begun; this time to the tune of a merry drinking-song, and loud, joyous voices rang through the hall.

While Abbot Cralo looked about with a somewhat dubious expression, and Master Spazzo was

## Ekkehard

still busily drinking to the health of the saint with the younger clergy, Dame Hadwig inclined her head toward Ekkehard and said in a half whisper: "Would you be willing to teach me Latin, young admirer of the classics, if I felt inclined to learn it?"

Then Ekkehard heard an inner voice, whispering like an echo of what he had read: "Throw thyself into the thorns and nettles, and say no!"—but heedless of the warning voice he replied: "Command, and I obey."

The Duchess gazed once more on the young monk with a furtive, searching look; then turned to the Abbot and talked of indifferent things.

The cloister inmates did not seem inclined as yet to let this day's unusual liberty end here. In the Abbot's eyes there was a peculiarly soft and lenient expression, and the cellarer also never said "nay" when the brothers descended with their empty wine-jugs into the vaults below.

At the fourth table old Tutilo began to get jolly, and was telling his inevitable story of the robbers. Louder and louder his powerful voice rang through the hall: "One of them turned to fly—I after him with my oaken stick—he throws away spear and shield to the ground—I quickly seize him by the throat, force the spear into his hand and cry: 'Thou knave of a robber, for what art thou encumbering the world? Thou shalt fight with me!'" . . .

## Ekkehard

But they had all heard it too often already how he had then in honest fight split open the skull of his antagonist—so they eagerly requested him to sing some favorite song, and on his giving an assenting nod, some of them hurried out, presently to return with their instruments. One of them brought a lute, another a violin with one string only, a third a sort of dulcimer with metal pegs, which were played on with a tuning key, and a fourth a small ten-stringed harp. This last curious-looking instrument was called a psalter, and its three-cornered shape was held to be a symbol of the Trinity.

When the instruments were tuned, they gave him his baton of ebony. Smilingly the hoary artist received it, and rising from his seat, gave them the signal to play a piece of music, which he himself had composed in his younger days. Gladly the others listened; only Gerold, the steward, became rather melancholy on hearing the melodious sounds, for he was just counting the empty dishes and stone jugs, and like a text to the melody the words vibrated through his mind: "How much this one day has swallowed up in goods and money!" Softly he beat time with his sandal-clad foot, until the last note had died away.

At the bottom of the table a silent guest, with a pale olive complexion and black curls, was sitting. He came from Italy, and had accompanied the mules loaded with chestnuts and oil, from Lom-

## Ekkehard

bardy over the Alp. In melancholy silence, he let the floods of song pass over him.

"Well, Master Giovanni," said Folkhard, the painter, "has the fine Italian ear been satisfied? The Emperor Julianus once compared the singing of our forefathers to the screeching of wild birds, but since that time we have made progress. Did it not sound lovelier in your ears than the singing of wild swans?"

"Lovelier—than the singing of swans"—repeated the stranger in dreamy accents. Then he arose and quietly stole away. Nobody in the monastery ever read what he wrote down in his journal that evening.

"These men on the other side of the Alp," he wrote, "when they let their thundering voices rise up to heaven, never can attain to the sweetness of an artistic modulation. Truly barbarous is the roughness of their wine-guzzling throats, and whenever they attempt by sinking and then raising their voices to attain a melodious softness, all nature shudders at the sound, and it resembles the creaking of chariot wheels on frozen ground...."

Master Spazzo, intending to end well what he had so well begun, slunk away to the building in which Praxedis and her companions were installed, and said: "You are to come to the Duchess, and that at once."

The maidens first laughed at his cowl, and then

## Ekkehard

followed him into the refectory, as there was no one to hinder their entrance; and as soon as they became visible at the open door, a buzzing and murmuring began, and a dancing and jumping seemed imminent, such as these walls had never seen before.

Sir Cralo, the Abbot, however, looked at the Duchess, and exclaimed: "My Lady Cousin!" and he said it with such a touching, wobegone expression, that she started up from her reverie. And suddenly she looked with different eyes than before on the chamberlain and herself, in their monk's habits, as well as on the rows of carousing men. The faces of the more distant ones were hidden by their projecting hoods, and it looked as if the wine was being poured down into empty cowls; in short, the scene with the boisterous music appeared to her altogether like a mad masquerade, that had lasted too long already.

So she said: "It is time to go to bed;" and then went with her retinue over to the schoolhouse, where she was to rest that night.

"Do you know what would have been the reward of dancing?" asked Sindolt of one of his fellow monks, who seemed rather sorry at this sudden termination of their festivity. He stared at him inquiringly. Then Sindolt made a movement which meant unmistakably "scourging."

# Ekkehard

## CHAPTER V

### EKKEHARD'S DEPARTURE

EARLY the next morning the Duchess and her attendants mounted their steeds, to ride homeward; and when she declined all parting ceremonies, the Abbot did not press her to the contrary. Therefore perfect quiet reigned in the monastery, while the horses were neighing impatiently. Only Sir Cralo came over, knowing well what good manners demanded.

Two of the brothers accompanied him. One of them carried a handsome crystal cup with a finely wrought silver foot and cover, in which many a pretty bit of onyx and emerald was set. The other carried a small jug of old wine. The Abbot pouring out some into the cup, then wished good speed to his cousin, begging her to drink the parting draft with him, and to keep the cup as a small remembrance.

In case that the present should not be thought sufficient, he had still another curious piece in the background, which though made of silver, had a very insignificant appearance, as it bore close re-



## Ekkehard

semblance to an ordinary loaf of bread. This could be opened, and was filled up to the brim with gold pieces. Without there being an absolute necessity for it, the Abbot did not intend to mention this; keeping it carefully hidden under his habit.

Dame Hadwig took the proffered cup, feigned to drink a little and then handing it back, said: "Pardon me, dear cousin, what shall a woman do with that drinking-vessel? I claim another parting gift. Did you not speak of the wells of wisdom yesterday? Give me a Virgil out of your library!"

"Always jesting," said Sir Cralo, who had expected a more costly demand. "What good can Virgil do you, as you do not know the language?"

"As a matter of course, you must give me the teacher with it," seriously replied Dame Hadwig.

But the Abbot shook his head in sign of displeasure. "Since what time are the disciples of St. Gallus given away as parting gifts?"

Upon this the Duchess resumed: "I suppose you understand me. The fair-haired custodian shall be my teacher; and three days hence, at the latest, he and the volume of Virgil shall make their appearance at my castle! Mind, that the settlement of the disputed land in the Rhine valley, as well as the confirmation of the monastery's rights, are in my hands; and that I am not disinclined to erect a small cloister to the disciples of St. Gallus,

## Ekkehard

on the rocks of the Hohentwiel. And so farewell, Sir Cousin!"

Then Sir Cralo, with a melancholy look, beckoned to the serving monk, to carry the chalice back to the treasury. Dame Hadwig gracefully extended her right hand to him; the mares pawed the ground; Master Spazzo took off his hat with a flourish, and the little cavalcade turned their backs on the monastery, setting out on their way homeward.

From the window of the watch-tower, an immense nosegay was thrown into the midst of the parting guests; in which there shone at least half a dozen sun-flowers, not to mention innumerable asters; but nobody caught it, and the horses' hoofs passed over it.

In the dry moat outside the gate the cloister-pupils had hidden themselves. "Long life to the Duchess of Suabia! Hail! hail!—and she must not forget to send us the fish!" was loudly shouted after her, as a parting salutation.

"He who as reward for his bad behavior obtains three holidays, and the best fish of the lake, may well shout," said Master Spazzo.

Slowly the Abbot went back to the monastery, and as soon as he got there, he sent for Ekkehard the custodian.

"A dispensation has come for you. You are to take a volume of Virgil to the Duchess Hadwig,

## Ekkehard

and become her teacher. "The old songs of Maro may soften the Scythian customs by their lovely tunes"—is written in Sidonius. I know that it is not your wish"—Ekkehard cast down his eyes, with a heightened color—"but we must not offend the mighty ones of this earth. To-morrow, you will set out on your journey. 'Tis with regret that I lose you, for you were one of the best and most dutiful here. The holy Gallus will not forget the service which you are rendering him. Don't omit to cut out the title-page of Virgil, on which is written the curse on him who takes the book away from the monastery."

That which our hearts desire, we gladly suffer to be put on us as a duty.

"The vow of obedience," said Ekkehard, "obliges me to do the will of my Superior, without fear or delay, without regret or murmur."

He bent his knee before the Abbot, and then went to his cell. It seemed to him as if he had been dreaming. Since yesterday, almost too much had occurred for him. It is often so in life. In a long period, time pursues its monotonous way, but when once we come to a turning-point, then one change follows another. He prepared himself for the journey.

"What thou hast begun, leave unfinished behind thee; draw back thy hand from the work it was employed on, and go away with thy heart full of

## Ekkehard

obedience"—he scarcely needed to remind himself of this portion of the rules.

In his cell lay the parchment leaves of a psalm-book, which had been written and illustrated by Folkard's masterly hand. Ekkehard had been commissioned to finish up the first letter on each page, with the precious gold-color which the Abbot had lately bought from a Venetian merchant; and by adding faint golden lines at the crowns, sceptres, and swords, as well as at the borders of the mantles, to give the last touch to the figures.

He took up parchments and colors, and brought them over to his companion, that he might put the finishing strokes to the work himself. Folkard was just about to compose a new picture: David playing the lute, and dancing before the ark of the Covenant. He did not look up, and Ekkehard silently left the studio again.

After this he bent his steps to the library, there to fetch the Virgil, and when he stood all alone in the high-arched hall among the silent parchments a feeling of melancholy came over him. Even lifeless things, when one is about to take leave of them, seem to possess something of a soul, and to share some of the feelings which are moving our own hearts.

The books were his best friends. He knew them all, and knew who had written them. Some of the handwritings reminded him of companions whom death had gathered already.

## Ekkehard

"What will the new life, which begins to-morrow, bring to me?" he thought, while a solitary tear started into his eye. At that moment his gaze fell on the small, metal-bound glossary, in which the holy Gallus, not knowing the German language, had had a translation of the most familiar words and sentences written down by the priest of Arbon. Then Ekkehard bethought himself how the founder of the monastery had once set out, with so little help and preparation, a stranger into heathen lands; and how his God and his courageous heart had protected him in all dangers and sorrows. His spirits rose; he kissed the little book, took the Virgil from the book-shelf, and then turned to go.

"Whoever carries away this book shall receive a thousand lashes of the scourge; may palsy and leprosy attack him"—was written on the title-page.

Ekkehard cut it out.

Once more he looked around, as if to take a final leave of all the books. At that moment a rustling was heard in the wall, and the large sketch which the architect Gerung had once drawn, when Abbot Hartmuth had wanted a new building to be added to the monastery, fell to the ground, raising a cloud of dust.

Ekkehard did not regard this occurrence in the light of a presentiment or warning.

## Ekkehard

On walking along the passage of the upper story, he passed an open chamber. This was the snugger of the old men. The blind Thieto, who had been Abbot before Cralo, until his waning eyesight had forced him to resign, was sitting there. A window was open, so that the old man could breathe freely and enjoy the warm sunny air. With him Ekkehard had spent many an hour in friendly converse. The blind man recognized his step and called him in.

"Where are you going?" asked he.

"Downstairs—and to-morrow I am going far away. Give me your hand, I am going to the Hohenwiel."

"Bad—very bad," muttered the old man.

"Why, Father Thieto?"

"The service of women is an evil thing for him who wishes to remain good. Court service is worse still. What, then, are both together?"

"It is my fate," said Ekkehard.

"St. Gallus keep you and bless you. I will pray for you. Give me my stick."

Ekkehard offered his arm, which was refused, however, and seizing his staff, the blind man rose, and went to a niche in the wall, from which he took out a small phial and gave it to Ekkehard.

"It's water from the river Jordan, which I took myself. When the dust of this world has covered your face, and is dimming your eyes, then bathe

## Ekkehard

them with it. It will not help me any more. Farewell."

In the evening Ekkehard mounted the little hill which rose behind the monastery. This was his favorite walk. In the fish-ponds which had been artificially made there, to supply the necessary fish for the fast-days, the dark fir-trees were reflected. A gentle breeze ruffled the surface of the water, in which the fish swam briskly about. With a smile he gazed at them, thinking, "When shall I taste you again?"

In the fir-wood on the top of the Freudenberg there was solemn silence. There he stopped to enjoy the extensive view before him.

At his feet lay the monastery, with all its buildings and walls. There, in the courtyard, was the well-known fountain; the garden was full of autumnal flowers, and in one long row the windows of the many cells were presented to his view. He knew each one, and saw also his own. "May God protect thee, peaceful abode!"

Contemplating the place where we have spent the days of our eager and striving youth works like a magnet on our hearts, which require so little to feel attracted. He only is poor to whom the great bustling life of this world has not granted time, bodily and mentally, to find a quiet resting-place—a real home.

Ekkehard raised his eyes. Far away in the dis-

## Ekkehard

tance, like the fair prospect of a distant future, the Bodensee's placid surface shone out like a mirror. The line of the opposite shore, as well as the outlines of the hills behind it, were covered with a light mist, only here and there a bright light and the reflection in the water indicating the dwelling-places of human beings.

"But what does the obscurity behind mean?" He turned round and beheld the Sentis rising with its horns and pinnacles behind the fir-clad hills. On the gray and weatherbeaten rocky walls the warm sunbeams were contending with the clouds, and lighting up the masses of old snow, which in its caves and crevices lay awaiting a new winter. Right over the Kamor hung a heavy cloud, which, widely extended, was obscuring the sun and throwing a gray and sombre light on the mountain-peaks around. Flashes of lightning were visible in the distance.

"Is that meant as a warning for me?" said Ekkehard. "I don't understand it. My way is not toward the Sentis."

Full of thoughts, he descended to the valley again.

In the night he prayed at the grave of St. Gallus, and early in the morning he bade good-by to all. The volume of Virgil and the little bottle of Thieto were packed up in his knapsack, which also held the few things besides that he possessed.



## Ekkehard

He who has not even his own person, his wishes and his desires at his free disposal, can still less have any worldly possessions and goods.

The Abbot gave him two gold-pieces and some silver coins as a traveling penny.

In a ship, laden with corn, he crossed the lake; a favorable wind filling the sail, and courage and the love of travel swelling his bosom.

At dinner-time the castle of Constance, as well as the cathedral with its towers, became more and more distinct.

With a joyous bound Ekkehard sprang on shore. In Constance he might have stopped and claimed the hospitality of the Bishop, but this he did not do. The place was disagreeable to him; he hated it from the bottom of his heart. Not on account of its position and scenery, for in that respect it may be boldly compared with any town on the lake, but on account of a man whom he detested.

This was the Bishop Salomon, who had been lately buried with great pomp in the cathedral. Ekkehard was a simple-minded, straightforward and pious man. To become proud and overbearing in the service of the church seemed very wrong to him; to combine this with worldly tricks and knavery, highly blamable; and in spite of wickedness of heart, to become famous, most strange. Such, however, had been the Bishop Salomon's career. Ekkehard well remembered having heard

## Ekkehard

from older companions how the young nobleman had forced his way into the monastery and acted as a spy; how he had managed to represent himself as indispensable to the Emperor, until the mitre of an Abbot of St. Gall was exchanged for that of a Bishop of Constance.

And the fate which had befallen the messengers of the exchequer—that was related by the children in the streets. These the intriguing prelate had provoked and insulted so long, till they, trying to right themselves with the sword, had made him prisoner; but though Sir Erchanger's wife Berchta tended and nursed him like a lord during his captivity, and begged him for the kiss of peace, and ate out of the same plate with him, his revenge was not appeased until the Emperor's court of law, at Adingen, condemned his enemies to be beheaded.

And the daughter which he had begotten in the early days of his student life was even then Lady Abbess at the cathedral in Zurich.

All this was known to Ekkehard; and in the church where that man was buried he did not like to pray.

It may be unjust to transfer the hatred which is intended for a human being alone to the actual spot where he has lived and died, but still one can understand this feeling. So he shook the dust from his feet, and walked out of the city gate, leav-

## Ekkehard

ing the stripling Rhine, having but just issued from the lake, on his right hand.

He cut for himself a strong walking-stick from a hazel-bush. "Like unto the rod of Aaron which budded in the temple of God, distinguishing his race from that of the degenerate Jews, so may this stick, blessed by God's grace, be my protection against the evil ones on my way," he said, in the words of an old blessing on walking-sticks.

His heart beat with pleasure, as he briskly walked along.

How full of hope and joy he is who in the days of his youth goes out on unknown paths to meet an unknown future. With the wide world before him, a blue sky overhead, and the heart fresh and trusting, as if his walking-stick must produce leaves and blossoms wherever he plants it in the ground, and must bear happiness in the shape of golden apples on its boughs. Walk merrily on. The day will come when thou also wilt drag thyself wearily along on the dusty highroads, when thy staff will be but a dry withered stick, when thy face will be pale and worn, and the children will be pointing their fingers at thee, laughing and asking: Where are the golden apples?

Ekkehard was truly light-hearted and content. To sing merry songs was not becoming for a man of his calling; more fitting was the song of David which he now began:

## Ekkehard

"The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want. He maketh me to lie down in green pastures: he leadeth me beside the still waters;" and this may have been registered in heaven in the same book in which the guardian angels of youth put down the merry songs of wandering scholars and apprentice boys.

His path took him through meadows and past high reeds. A long and narrow island, called Reichenau, extended itself in the lake. The towers and cloister-walls were mirrored in the placid waters, and vineyards, meadows, and orchards testified to the industry of the inhabitants. About two hundred years ago the island was but a barren tract, where damp ground had been inhabited by hideous crawling things and poisonous snakes. The Austrian Governor Sintlaz, however, begged the wandering Bishop Pirminius to come over, and to pronounce a solemn blessing on the island. Then the snakes went away in great masses, headed by the scolopendras, earwigs, and scorpions; toads and salamanders bringing up the rear. Nothing could resist the curse which the Bishop had pronounced over them. To the shore, on the spot where afterward the castle of Schopfeln was built, the swarm directed its course, and from thence they fell down into the green floods of the lake; and the fish had a good meal on that day.

From that time the monastery founded by St.

## Ekkehard

Pirminius had thriven and flourished, a hot-bed of monastic erudition of considerable repute in German lands.

“Reichenau, emerald isle, thou favorite child of kind nature,  
Rich with the laws of science, and all that is pious and godly,  
Rich in thy fruit-bearing trees, and the swelling grapes of thy vineyards;  
Proudly, and fair from the waves, the lily lifts its white petals,  
So that thy praise has e’en reached the misty land of the Britons.”

Thus sang the learned monk Ermenrich already in the days of Ludwig the German, when in his abbey of Ellwangen he was longing for the glittering waters of the Bodensee.

Ekkehard resolved to pay a visit to this rival of his monastery. On the white sandy shore of Ermingen a fisherman was standing in his boat, baling out water. Then Ekkehard, pointing with his staff toward the island, said: “Ferry me over there, my good friend.”

The monk’s habit in those days generally gave weight to all demands, but the fisherman crossly shook his head and said: “I will not take any more of you over, since you fined me a shilling at the last session-day.”

## Ekkehard

"Why did they fine you?"

"On account of the Kreuzmann!"

"And who is the Kreuzmann?"

"The Allmann."

"He likewise is unknown to me," said Ekkehard.

"What is he like?"

"He is made of metal," grumbled the fisherman, "two spans high, and holds three water-lilies in his hand. He was standing in the old willow tree at Allmannsdorf, and it was good that he stood there; but at the last session they took him out of the tree, and carried him into their cloister. So now he stands on that Italian bishop's grave at Niederzell. What good does he do there? Does he help dead saints to catch fish?"

Then Ekkehard perceived that the fisherman's Christian faith was as yet not very strong; and also why the bronze idol had cost him a shilling fine. He had sacrificed a kid to him at night-time, in order that his nets might be well filled with carp, trout, and perch; and the authorities had punished these heathenish memories according to the imperial laws.

"Be sensible, my good fellow," said Ekkehard, "and try to forget the Allmann. I will restore you a good part of your shilling if you will row me over."

"What I say," replied the old man, "shall not be turned round like a ring on a finger. I

## Ekkehard

will take none of you. My boy may do it if he likes."

He then whistled through his fingers, which brought his boy, a tall boatman, who undertook to row him over.

When Ekkehard landed, he directed his steps toward the monastery, which, hidden between fruit-trees and vine-clad hills, stands in the middle of the island.

The autumn was already advanced, and both old and young were occupied with the vintage. Here and there the hood of a serving brother stood out in dark contrast to the red and yellow vine-leaves. On the watch-tower the fathers of the monastery stood assembled in groups, looking down, and taking pleasure in the busy crowd of grape-gatherers below. In a large marble vase, which was believed to be one of the identical vessels used at the marriage at Cana, the new wine had been carried about in the procession to receive the blessing. Merry shouts and singing were heard from all sides.

Unobserved, Ekkehard reached the monastery, and when he was but a few steps from it he perceived the heavy tower with its vestibule, the arches of which are ornamented alternately with red and gray sandstone.

In the court all was hushed and silent. A large dog wagged its tail at the stranger without giving

## Ekkehard

a single growl, for it knew better than to bark at a monk's habit. All the brotherhood seemed to have been enticed into the open air by the beautiful weather.

Ekkehard now entered the vaulted room for visitors, near the entrance. Even the doorkeeper's chamber next to it was empty. Open tuns were standing about, some filled already with the newly pressed wine. Behind these, near the wall, was a stone bench, and Ekkehard, feeling tired from his long walk, the fresh breeze having blown about his head and made him sleepy, he put his staff against the wall, lay down on the bench, and soon fell asleep.

As he lay thus, a slow step approached the cool recess. This was the worthy brother Rudimann, the cellarer. He carried a small stone jug in his right hand, and had come to fulfil his duty by tasting the new wine. The smile of a man contented with himself and with the world was on his lips; and his belly had thriven well, like the household of an industrious man. Over this he wore a white apron, and at his side dangled a ponderous bunch of keys.

"As cellarer shall be chosen some wise man of ripe judgment, sober, and no glutton; no quarreler or fault-finder, no idler and no spendthrift; but a pious man, who will be to the whole brotherhood like a father." And as far as the weakness of the



## Ekkehard

flesh allowed this, Rudimann strove to unite in himself the above-mentioned qualities. At the same time he had to perform the unpleasant duty of carrying out the punishments, and whenever one of the brothers became liable to a flogging he tied him to the pillar, and nobody could then complain of the weakness of his arm. That he, besides this, sometimes uttered malicious speeches with a malicious tongue, and tried to entertain the Abbot with insinuations against his fellow-monks—like the squirrel Ratatöskr of the Edda, which ran up and down the ash tree called Yggdrasil, and repeated the eagle's angry speeches at the top of the tree to Nidhögge, the dragon, at the bottom—this was none of his business, and he did it of his own free will.

To-day, however, he wore a very benign and mild expression, the result of the excellent vintage; and he dipped his drinking vessel into an open vat, held it toward the window, and then slowly sipped its contents, without observing the sleeping guest.

"This also is sweet," said he, "though it comes from the northern side of the hill. Praised be the Lord, who, taking the position and wants of his servants on this island into due consideration, has given a fat year after so many meagre ones."

Meanwhile Kerhildis, the upper maid-servant, passed the door, carrying a tub full of grapes to the press.

## Ekkehard

"Kerhildis," whispered the cellarer, "most trustworthy of all maids, take my jug, and fill it with wine from the Wartberg, which you will find over there, that I may compare it with this one."

Kerhildis put down her load, went away, and speedily returning, stood before Rudimann with the jug in her hand. Archly looking up at him, for he was a head taller than she was, she said: "To your health."

Rudimann took a long, pious draft as a taste, so that the new wine ran down his throat, with a low melodious gurgle.

"It will all be sweet and good," said he, lifting his eyes with emotion, and that they then fell on the maid-servant's beaming countenance was scarcely the cellarer's fault, as she had had plenty of time in which to retire.

So he continued with unction: "But when I look at thee, Kerhildis, my heart becomes doubly glad, for you also thrive as the cloister-wine does this autumn, and your cheeks are like the pomegranates, waiting to be plucked. Rejoice with me over the goodness of this wine, best of all maids."

So saying, the cellarer put his arm round the waist of the dark-eyed maid, who did not resist very long; for what is a kiss at vintage-time?—and besides she knew Rudimann to be a man of sober character, who did everything in moderation, as it befitted a cellarer.

## Ekkehard

The sleeper started up from his slumbers on the stone bench. A peculiar noise, which could be caused by nothing else but by a well-meant and well-applied kiss, struck his ear; and looking through the opening between the vats, he saw the cellarer's garments covered with flowing tresses, which could not well belong to that habit. Up he sprang, for Ekkehard was young and zealous, and moreover accustomed to the strict discipline of St. Gall. The idea that a man in the holy garb of the order could kiss a woman had never struck him as possible before.

Snatching up his strong hazel-wand, he quickly advanced, and with it struck a powerful blow at the cellarer, which extended from the right shoulder to the left hip, and which fitted like a coat made according to measure; and before the astonished Rudimann had recovered from the first shock, there followed a second and third blow of the same description. He dropped his pitcher, which was shattered to pieces on the stone floor, while Kerhildis fled.

"In the name of the pitcher at the marriage at Cana!" cried Rudimann, "what is the meaning of this!" and turning round on his assailant, the two looked into each other's face for the first time.

"'Tis a present which the holy Gallus sends to St. Pirminius," replied Ekkehard fiercely, again raising his stick.

## Ekkehard

"Well, I might have guessed as much," roared the cellarer, "St. Gallish crab-apples! You may be recognized by your fruits. Rough ground, rough faith, and rougher people! Just wait for the present; I shall make thee in return!"

Looking about for some weapon, and perceiving a good-sized broom, he took it up, and was just about to attack the disturber of his peace, when a commanding voice called out from the gate:

"Stop! Peace be with you!" And a second voice with a foreign accent exclaimed: "What Holofernes has sprung out of the ground here?"

It was the Abbot Wazmann, who with his friend Simon Bardo, the former commander of the Greek Emperor's body-guard, was returning from blessing the new wine. The noise of the quarrel had interrupted a very learned discussion of the Greek on the siege of the town of Hai by Joshua and the strategic mistakes of the King of Hai when he went out at the head of his army toward the desert. The old Greek commander, who had left his home, not to lose his strength of body and mind, in the peaceful state of Byzantium, employed himself very zealously with the study of tactics in his leisure hours; and he was jestingly called "the Captain of Capernaum," although he had adopted the garb of the Order.

"Make room for the fight," cried Simon Bardo, who had witnessed with regret the interruption of

## Ekkehard

the combat by the Abbot. "In my dreams last night I saw a rain of fiery sparks. That means fighting."

But the Abbot, in whose eyes the self-assumed power of younger brothers was most obnoxious, commanded peace, and desired to hear the case before him, that he might settle it.

Then Rudimann began his tale, and kept back nothing. "A slight misdemeanor," murmured the Abbot. "Chapter forty-six: of misbehavior during work-time, while gardening or fishing, in the kitchen or cellar. Allemannic law, of that which is done to maids . . . let the antagonist speak."

Then Ekkehard also told what he had witnessed; and how he had acted on the impulse of a just and righteous indignation.

"This is complicated," murmured the Abbot. "Chapter seventy: no brother shall dare to strike a fellow-brother without the Abbot's sanction. Chapter seventy-two: of that which is becoming in a monk; and which leads to eternal felicity. . . . How old are you?"

"Twenty-three."

Then the Abbot seriously resumed: "The quarrel is ended. You, brother cellarer, may look on the blows received as the just retribution for your forgetfulness; and you, stranger, I might well bid to continue your journey, for the laws say: 'Whenever a stranger-monk enters a monastery, he shall

## Ekkehard

be satisfied with everything he meets there, allowing himself only mild reproof, and not making himself officious in any way.' In consideration of your youth, however, as well as the blameless motive of your action, you shall be allowed to pass an hour's devotion at the chief altar of our church, in expiation of your rashness, and after that you will be welcome as the guest of the monastery."

The Abbot's sentence fared as many an impartial judgment has fared before. Neither of the two contestants was satisfied. They obeyed, but they were not reconciled. While Ekkehard was performing his expiatory prayers, many thoughts and reflections on timely zeal, good-will, and other people's opinion thereon crossed his mind. It was one of the first lessons he learned from contact with other men. He returned to the monastery by a little side door.

What Kerhildis, the upper-maid, related that evening to her companions, in the sewing-room at Oberzell, where they had to make a dozen new monk's habits, by the flickering light of the pine-wood, was couched in such very insulting terms, regarding the disciples of the holy Gallus, that it had better not be repeated here!

# Ekkehard

## CHAPTER VI

### MOENGAL

WHILE Ekkehard was performing his compulsory devotions in the church at Reichenau, Dame Hadwig had stood on the balcony, looking out into the distance; but not on account of the setting sun, for the sun went to his rest at her back, behind the dark hills of the Black Forest, and Dame Hadwig looked with eager, expectant eyes toward the lake, and the path which led from it up to the Hohentwiel. The view, however, did not appear to satisfy her, for when the twilight melted into darkness, she went in rather discontented, ordered her chamberlain to come, and conversed a long time with him.

Early the next morning Ekkehard stood at the threshold of the cloister, ready to continue his journey. The Abbot was also up betimes, and was taking a walk in the garden. The serious look of the judge was no longer visible on his face. Ekkehard said good-by to him. Then the Abbot, with a meaning smile, whispered in his ear: "Happy man, who has to teach grammar to such a fair

## Ekkehard

pupil." These words stabbed Ekkehard to the heart. An old story rose in his memory; for even within cloister-walls there are evil, gossiping tongues, and traditional stories which go round, from mouth to mouth.

"You are probably thinking of the time," replied he tauntingly, "when you were instructing the nun Clotildis in the act of dialectics; Sir Abbot."

After this he went down to the boat. The Abbot would much rather have taken a quantity of pepper for his breakfast, than have had that fact called up to his mind. "A pleasant journey!" he called out after his departing guest.

From that time, Ekkehard had drawn down on himself the enmity of the monks at Reichenau. This, however, he little heeded; and was rowed down the lake, by the same boatman of Ermatingen.

Dreamily he gazed about from his boat. Over the lake transparent white mists were floating, through which the little belfry of Egina's cloister, Niederzell, peeped out on the left, while on the other side the island stretched out its farthest points. A large stone-built castle could be seen through the willow-bushes, but Ekkehard's eyes were riveted on a more distant point. Proud and grand, in steep, bold outlines a rocky mountain-peak rose above the hills on the shore, like to a



## Ekkehard

mighty spirit, which, ponderous and pregnant with action, towers over the insignificant objects around. The morning sun was casting faint gleams of light on the rocky edges and steep walls. A little to the right, several lower hills of the same shape stood modestly there, like sentinels of the mighty one.

"The Hohentwiel," said the boatman to Ekkehard. The latter had never before beheld the place of his destination, but he did not need the boatman's information. Inwardly thinking, "This must be the mountain which she has chosen for her residence."

A deep, earnest expression overspread his features. Mountain-ranges, extensive plains, water, and sky, in fact all that is grand and beautiful in nature always produces seriousness. Only the actions of men sometimes bring a smile to the lips of the looker-on. He was thinking of the apostle John, who had gone to the rocky isle of Patmos, and who had there met with a revelation.

The boatman rowed steadily onward; and they had already come to the projecting neck of land, on which Radolfszell and a few scattered houses were situated, when they suddenly came in view of a strange little canoe. It was simply made of the rough, hollow trunk of a tree, roofed over and quite covered up with green boughs and water-rushes, so that the rower inside was invisible. The

## Ekkehard

wind drifted it toward a thick plantation of water-reeds and bulrushes near the shore.

Ekkehard ordered his ferryman to stop this curious little boat, and in obedience he pushed his oar into the green covering.

"Ill luck befall you!" called out a deep bass voice from the inside; "*oleum et operam perdidit*, all my labor lost! Wild geese and water-ducks are gone to the Devil!"

A covey of water-fowl, which hoarsely shrieking rose up from the rushes, corroborated the truth of this exclamation.

After this, the leafy boughs were pushed aside, and a brown weather-beaten and deeply furrowed countenance peeped out. The man it belonged to was clothed in an old faded priest's robe, which, cut off at the knees by an unskilled hand, hung down in a ragged fringe. At his girdle, the owner of the boat wore, instead of a rosary, a quiver full of arrows, while his bow lay at the head of the boat.

The individual just described was about to repeat his cursing, when he beheld Ekkehard's tonsure and Benedictine garment, and, quickly changing his tone, he cried: "Oho! *salve confrater!* By the beard of St. Patrick of Armagh! If your curiosity had left me unmolested another quarter of an hour, I might have invited you to a goodly repast of the game of our lake." With a melan-

## Ekkehard

choly expression he cast a look at the covey of wild ducks in the distance.

Ekkehard smilingly lifted his forefinger: "*Ne clericus venationi incumbat!* No consecrated servant of God shall be a sportsman!"

"Your book wisdom does not do for us at the Untersee," called out the other. "Are you sent hither, perhaps, to hold a church examination with the parish priest of Radolfszell?"

"The parish priest of Radolfszell?" inquired Ekkehard in his turn. "Do I verily see the brother Marcellus?" He cast a side look on the sportsman's right arm, from which the sleeve was turned back, and there beheld, etched into the flesh, in rough outline, a picture of our Saviour, encircled by a serpent, over which stood the words, "*Christus vindex.*"

"Brother Marcellus?" laughed the other, pushing his hair back from his forehead. "To be sure! Welcome in Moengal's realm!"

He stepped out of the canoe into Ekkehard's boat, and, kissing him on cheek and forehead, he said: "Health to the holy Gallus! And now we will land together, and you shall be my guest, even without the wild ducks."

"Of yourself I had conceived a very different idea," said Ekkehard, and this was not to be wondered at.

Nothing gives a more erroneous idea of persons,

## Ekkehard

than when we come to the places where they once lived and worked, there to see fragmentary bits of their activity; and from the remarks of those left behind, to form in ourselves an impression of those that are gone. The deepest and most peculiar part of the character of a man is frequently unnoticed by others, even though it be open to the day, and in tradition it disappears entirely.

When Ekkehard had joined the monastery, the brother Marcellus had already left it, to assume the priest's office at Radolfzell. Some neatly written manuscripts, such as Cicero's book on duty, and a Latin Priscianus with Irish characters between the lines, still kept up the remembrance of him. His name too was held in great veneration in the inner cloister-school, where he had been one of the most distinguished teachers. Besides this, he had led a blameless life, but since that time nothing had been heard of him at St. Gall. For these reasons, instead of the lively sportsman, Ekkehard had expected to find a serious, meagre, and pale-faced scholar.

The shores of Radolfzell were soon reached. A thin silver coin, stamped on one side only, satisfied the boatman, and then the two stepped on shore. A few houses and a handful of fishermen's huts surrounded the little church which holds the remains of St. Radolf.

"We have reached Moengal's dwelling," said

## Ekkehard

the old man. "Be pleased to enter. "It's to be hoped that you will not carry tales about my house to the Bishop of Constance, like the deacon of Rheingau, who asserted that he found the jugs and drinking-horns of an outrageous size.

They entered into a wainscoted hall. Stag antlers and bison-horns hung over the entrance, while spears and fishing-tackle of every description ornamented the walls in picturesque confusion. Close to a reversed tun in one corner stood a dice-box; in fact, if it had not been the abode of the parish priest, it might have been that of an imperial gamekeeper.

A few moments later a jug of somewhat sour wine, as well as a loaf of bread and some butter, were placed on the oak table; and when the priest returned from an expedition to the kitchen he held up his habit like a filled apron, and poured down a shower of smoked fish before his guest.

*"Heu quod anseres fugasti, antvogelasque et horotumblum!* Alas that you should have frightened away the wild geese, as well as the ducks and moor-fowls!" said he, adding this translation of his primitive Latin; "but when a person has to choose between smoked fish and nothing, he always chooses the former."

Members of the same fraternity are quickly at their ease with each other; and a lively conversation was kept up during the meal. But the old

## Ekkehard

man had far more questions to put than Ekkehard could well answer. Of many a one of his former brothers nothing else was to be told but that his coffin had been laid in the vault, side by side with the others, a cross on the wall, besides an entry in the death-register, being the sole trace left that he had ever lived. The stories, jokes, and quarrels which had been told thirty years ago had been replaced by new ones, and all that had happened lately did not interest him much. Only when Ekkehard told him about the end and aim of his journey he exclaimed: "Oho, *confrater!* how could you cry out against all sport, when you yourself aim at such noble deer!"

But Ekkehard turned the subject by asking him: "Have you never felt any longing for quiet and study within cloister-walls?"

At that question the parish priest's eyes lighted up: "Did Catilina ever feel any longing for the wooden benches of the senate after they had said to him: *excessit, evasit, erupit?* Young men like you can not understand that. The flesh-pots of Egypt? *Ille terrarum mihi praeter omnes . . .* said the dog to the kennel, in which he had lain seven years."

"No, I certainly do not understand you," replied Ekkehard. "What was it that created such a change in your views?" casting a look at the sportsman's implements, which were lying about.

## Ekkehard

"Time," replied the priest, beating his fish on the table to make them tender; "time and growing experience. But this you need not repeat to your Abbot. I also was once such a man as you are now, for Ireland produces pious people, as is well known here. *Eheu!* what a different being I was when I returned with my uncle Marcus from our pilgrimage to Rome. You should have seen the young Moengal then! The whole world was not worth a herring to him, while psalm-singing, vigils, and spiritual exercises were his heart's delight. Thus we entered the monastery of St. Gallus—for in honor of a countryman, an honest Hibernian does not mind going a few miles out of his way—and finally I stopped there altogether. Outward property, books, money, and knowledge—the whole man became the monastery's own, and the Irish Moengal was called Marcellus, and threw his uncle's silver and golden coins out of the window, thus to break down the bridge leading back to the world. They were fine times I tell you, praying, fasting, and studying to my heart's content."

"But then too much sitting is unhealthful, and much knowledge gives one a quantity of superfluous work to do. Many an evening I have meditated like a book-worm, and disputed like a magpie; for there was nothing which could not be proved. Where the head of St. John the Baptist was buried, and in what language the serpent had

## Ekkehard

spoke to Adam—all was investigated and demonstrated, while such ideas as that human beings had also received flesh and blood from their Creator never entered my head. Alas! *confrater*, then there came evil hours for me, such as I hope may be spared you. The head grew heavy, and the hands restless. Neither at the writing-desk nor in the church could I find rest or peace: 'Hence, hence!' was the inward cry of my heart. I once said to the old Thieto that I had made a discovery. 'What discovery?' quoth he. That outside the cloister-walls there was fresh air. . . . Then they forbade me to go out; but many a night did I steal up to the belfry, to look out and envy the bats that could fly over into the pine woods. . . . *Confrater*, that can not be cured by fasting and prayer, for that which is in human nature must come out.

"The late Abbot at last took pity on me, and sent me here for one year; but the Brother Marcellus never returned. When I cut down a pine tree in the sweat of my brow, and made myself a boat out of it, and struck down the bird flying in the air, then I began to understand what it meant to be healthy. Hunting and fishing drive away morbid fancies. In this way I have performed the priest's duties at Radolfszell for thirty years, *rusticitate quadam imbutus*—liable to become a rustic, but what does it matter? 'I am like the pelican in the wilderness, and, like the owl, I have



## Ekkehard

built my nest amidst ruins,' says the psalmist; but I am fresh and strong, and old Moengal does not intend to become a dead man so soon, and he knows that he is at least secure against *one* evil . . ."

"And that is?" inquired Ekkehard.

"That St. Peter will not one day give me a blow on the forehead with the blessed key of heaven, saying, 'Off with you, who have meddled with vain and useless philosophy!'"

Ekkehard did not reply to Moengal's outpourings. "I suppose," said he, "that you have often hard work with your ecclesiastical duties. Hardened hearts, heathendom, and heresy."

"'Tis not so bad as they make it out to be," said the old man. "To be sure in the mouths of Bissops and Chamberlains, and in the reports of the session and the synod, it seems terrifying enough when they describe the heathenish idolatry, and threaten it with punishment. Here we have simply the old faith tracing the Godhead in tree and river and on mountain heights. Everybody in this world must have his book of revelation, his apocalypse. Now the people hereabouts have theirs in the open air; and really, one is capable of high and holy thoughts when, early in the morning, one stands in the water-reeds and sees the glorious sun arise. Nevertheless they come to me, on the Lord's day, and chant the Mass; and if they were not fined so often, they would open their

## Ekkehard

hearts to the Gospel far more readily still. A bumper, *confrater*, to the fresh air!"

"Allow me," said Ekkehard, "I will drink to the health of Marcellus, the teacher at the cloister-school, and the learned author of the Irish translation of 'Priscianus.'"

"Very well," laughed Moengal. "But with regard to the Irish translation, I am afraid that all is not as it should be."

Ekkehard was very anxious to reach his destination, for anybody who is close to the end of his journey is loth to tarry long. "The mountain stands fast enough," said Moengal; "that won't run away, you may be sure."

But Moengal's wine, and his ideas of fresh air, had nothing very tempting for him who was about to go to a Duchess. So he rose from his seat.

"I will accompany you to the borders of my district," said the priest, "for to-day you may still walk by my side, in spite of my torn and faded garments; but when you are once settled down on yonder mountain, you will believe yourself transfigured, and that you have become a grand lord; and on the day that you will pass Radolfszell, and will behold old Moengal standing on the threshold, then, perhaps, you will hardly deign to wave your hand to him—that is the way of the world."

"It is not fair that you should speak thus," said Ekkehard, kissing his Irish brother.

## Ekkehard

Then they set out together, Moengal taking his lime-twigs with him, therewith to ensnare birds on his return. It was a long distance through the pine wood, and no sound was stirring.

Where the trees were less crowded together they could see the dark mass of the Hohentwiel, throwing its shadow over them. Moengal's sharp eyes now looked searchingly along the path, and shaking his head, he muttered: "There's something coming."

They had proceeded a short way when Moengal seized his companion's arm, and, pointing forward, he said: "These are neither wild ducks nor animals of the forest!"

At the same moment was heard a sound like the neighing of a horse in the distance. Moengal sprang aside, glided through the trees, and, lying down on the ground, listened intently.

"Sportsman's fancy," muttered Ekkehard to himself, quietly waiting till Moengal came back and inquired: "Brother, do you know whether St. Gallus is at war with any of the mighty ones in the land?"

"No."

"Then it may be that you have offended some one?"

"No."

"Strange," said the old man, "for three armed men are coming toward us."

## Ekkehard

"Most likely they are messengers sent by the Duchess to receive me," said Ekkehard, with a proud smile.

"Oho!" muttered Moengal, "you've not hit the mark there. That is not the livery of the Duchess's vassals. The helmet has no distinguishing mark, and no one on the Hohentwiel wears a gray mantle!"

He stood still now.

"Forward," said Ekkehard. "He whose conscience is clear is protected by the angels of the Lord."

"Not always, at least in the Hegau," replied the old man. There was no more time for continuing the dialogue, for the tramp of horses' feet and the clattering of arms was heard, and the next moment three men on horseback, with closed visors and drawn swords, became visible.

"Follow me!" cried the priest; "*maturate fugam!*" He threw his lime-twigs on the ground, and tried to drag Ekkehard along with him, but when he resisted, Moengal sprang into the bushes alone. The thorns added new rents to the old ones in his well-worn garments, but this he heeded not, and, tearing himself free, he escaped into the thicket with the agility of a squirrel. He knew a few tricks!

"It is he!" called out one of the riders; upon which the others jumped out of their saddles.

## Ekkehard

Ekkehard stood proudly waiting for them. "What do you want?" No answer. Then he seized the crucifix suspended from his girdle, and was just beginning with "In the name of our Saviour" . . . when he was already thrown on the ground. Rough, strong hands held him as in a vise; a cord was twisted round his arms, which were then tied behind his back; a white handkerchief bound over his eyes, so that he could see nothing, and then the command "Forward" was given.

Surprise and consternation at this strange treatment had quite paralyzed him, so that he advanced with tottering steps, upon which they took him up, and carried him to the opening of the wood, where four men were waiting with a sedan-chair.

Into this they threw their victim, and then the train sped onward; Ekkehard noticing by the tramp of the horses' feet that his captors remained at his side.

While Moengal was fleeing through the wood, the blackbirds and linnets flew about so confidently from bough to bough, and the thrushes' clear notes sounded so tempting, that he forgot all danger, and his heart upbraided him for having dropped the lime-twigs.

When even the quail now sang out its "Quak-kera! quak-kera!" it sounded downright provoking, and he turned his steps back toward the spot where he had left his companion. Everything was quiet

## Ekkehard

there, as if nothing had happened. In the distance he could see the sun shining on the helmets of the departing knights.

"Many that are first shall be last," said he, shaking his head and bending down to pick up his lime-twigs. "He expected to go to a princess's castle, and a prison opens to receive him. Holy Gallus, pray for us!"

Further reflections did not trouble Moengal's brains. Such deeds of violence were as plentiful as primroses in spring-time.

Once a fish swam about in the Lake of Constance, and could not understand what the cormorant meant by coming down on it, and the black diver had already got it in its beak, and flew away with it, and the fish could still not understand it.

So it was with Ekkehard, lying with tied hands in the sedan-chair; for the more he reflected about this sudden change in his fate the less could he comprehend it.

Now the idea rose dimly within him that some friend or relation of those messengers of the exchequer might live in the Hegau and revenge their death on the innocent disciple of St. Gallus; for Salomon, who had occasioned their shameful execution, had once been Abbot of St. Gall. In that case, Ekkehard had to prepare himself for the worst; as he well knew that neither tonsure nor monk's habit would be any protection against hav-

## Ekkehard

ing his eyes burned out or hands cut off if it was a question of revenge.

He thought of death. With his conscience he was at peace, and death itself had no terror for him; but yet in his heart there arose the faint murmur: "Why not a year later, after I have set foot on the Hohentwiel?"

Now his bearers were moving more slowly, as they were walking uphill. Into which of their robbers' nests were they carrying him? They had ascended for about half an hour, when the tramp of the horses' feet made a hollow sound, as if they were going over a wooden bridge. Still everything was quiet; there was no call even of the watchman on the tower. The decisive moment was close at hand, and Ekkehard now felt new courage and confidence rising within his heart, as he remembered the words of the psalmist:

"He that dwelleth in the secret place of the Most High shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty.

"I will say of the Lord, he is my refuge and my fortress: my God; in him will I trust."

Another bridge was crossed, then a gate opened and the sedan-chair was put down; after which they took out their prisoner. His foot touched the ground; he felt grass, and heard a faint whispering, as if there were many people around him. At the same time the cords were loosened.

## Ekkehard

"Take away the bandage from your eyes," said one of his companions. He obeyed, and—oh, heart, do not break with too much happiness!—he stood in the courtyard on the Hohentwiel.

The wind was rustling in the boughs of the old linden-tree, to which a tent-like linen cloth was fastened, from which garlands of ivy and vine-leaves were hanging. All the inhabitants of the fortress were assembled, and on a stone bench in the midst sat the Duchess. From her shoulders the princely mantle of dark purple descended in heavy folds; a sweet smile softened her haughty features, and now the stately figure rose, and advanced toward Ekkehard.

"Welcome to Hadwig's domains!"

Ekkehard had as yet scarcely realized his position. He was about to kneel down before her, but she prevented him by graciously extending her hand to him. Throwing aside his gray mantle, the chamberlain Spazzo now likewise came forward and embraced Ekkehard like an old friend.

"In the name of our gracious mistress, please to receive the kiss of peace."

A faint suspicion that he was being played with crossed Ekkehard's mind; but the Duchess now called out laughingly: "You have been paid in your own coin. As you did not allow the Duchess of Suabia to cross the threshold of St. Gallus otherwise, it was but fair that she also should have the



## Ekkehard

man of St. Gall carried through the gateway into her castle."

Master Spazzo again shook hands with him, and said: "I hope you're not angry; we were but acting up to our mistress's commands!" He had first headed the attack, and was now helping to welcome Ekkehard, doing both with the same pompous air, for a chamberlain must be flexible, and even know how to reconcile contradictions.

Ekkehard smiled. "For a mere jest, you have acted your part very seriously." He remembered how one of the riders had given him a good thrust between the ribs with the butt-end of his lance when they threw him into the sedan-chair. This had certainly not been the Duchess's order; but the lancer had once been present when Luitfried, the nephew of one of the exchequer's messengers, had thrown down the Bishop Salomon; and from that time he had kept the erroneous notion that a good blow or kick was absolutely necessary to throw down anybody belonging to the church.

Dame Hadwig now took her guest by the hand and showed him her airy castle with its beautiful view of the Bodensee and the distant mountain peaks. Then all the people belonging to the castle came and asked for Ekkehard's blessing, among them also the lancers; and he blessed them all.

The Duchess accompanied him to the entrance of his chamber, where new clothes and other com-

## Ekkehard

forts awaited him; there she told him to rest himself from the fatigues of the journey; and Ekkehard felt happy and light-hearted after his strange adventure.

The following night it occurred in the monastery of St. Gall that Romeias, the gatekeeper, started up from his couch without any reason and fiercely blew his horn, so that the dogs barked loudly and everybody awoke. Yet there was no one asking admittance. The Abbot concluded that it was the doing of evil spirits, but at the same time ordered Romeias's evening drink to be reduced to one half for six days—a measure which was, however, based on very wrong suppositions.

## CHAPTER VII

### VIRGIL ON THE HOHENTWIEL

AFTER one has got over the trouble and fatigue of a migration to a new residence, it is very pleasant work to find everything about one cozy and comfortable.

No one ought to think it a matter of indifference in what place he lives and what his surroundings are. He whose windows, for instance, look out on a highway, where carts and carriages are constantly passing, and on which stones are being

## Ekkehard

ground to pieces, is certainly oftener visited by gray, dusty thoughts than by gay, many-colored fancies.

With regard to situation, Ekkehard might well be contented; for the ducal castle on the Hohen-twiél was high, airy, and lonely enough; but still he was not quite satisfied when, on the day after his arrival, Dame Hadwig showed him his domicile.

It was a spacious chamber, with arched windows supported on pillars, and was entered by the same passage which also led to the Duchess's hall and chambers. Now the impressions which a man takes with him from his lonely cloister-cell are not to be shaken off in one single night, and Ekkehard reflected how often he might be disturbed in his meditations if the tread of armor-clad men or the softer footstep of serving-maids were to pass his door, where he might even hear the mistress of the castle passing up and down in her chambers. So he simply addressed himself to the Duchess, saying: "I have a favor to ask of you, my liege lady."

"Speak," said she mildly.

"Could you not give me, besides this grand room, a more distant and solitary little chamber, no matter whether it be high up under the roof or in one of the watch-towers? One great requirement for the study of science, as well as the exercise of prayer, is perfect quiet, according to the rules of the cloister!"

## Ekkehard

On hearing this, a slight frown overshadowed Dame Hadwig's fair brow. It was not a cloud—only a cloudlet. "If you wish to be often quite alone," said she with a satirical smile, "why did you not stay at St. Gall?"

Ekkehard bowed his head and remained silent.

"Stay," cried Dame Hadwig, "your wish shall be fulfilled. You can look at the room in which Vincentius, our chaplain, lived till his blessed end. He also had the taste of a bird of prey, and preferred being the highest on the Hohentwiel to being the most comfortable. Praxedis, get the large bunch of keys and accompany our guest."

Praxedis obeyed. The chamber of the late chaplain was high up in the square tower of the castle. Slowly the maid ascended the winding staircase, followed by Ekkehard. The key grated in the long unused lock, and, creaking on its hinges, the heavy door swung back. They entered; but what a sight was before them!

Where a learned man has lived it takes some time to destroy all traces of him. The room in question, of moderate size and with whitewashed walls, contained but little furniture; dust and cobwebs covered everything. On the oak table in the middle stood a small pot that had once served as an inkstand, but the ink had long been dried up. In one corner stood a stone jug, which in former times had probably held the sparkling wine. On a

## Ekkehard

rough bookshelf were some books, and close by some open parchments; but—oh, misery!—a storm had broken the little window, so that Vincentius's room, after his death, had been open to sunshine and rain, to insects and birds. A flock of pigeons, taking undisputed possession, had snugly settled down among all the book-wisdom. On the epistles of St. Paul and Julius Cæsar's Gallic wars they had built their nests, and now looked with surprise at the intruders.

Opposite the door was written with charcoal on the wall the text: "Martha, Martha, thou art careful and troubled about many things." Ekkehard read it, and then asked his lovely guide, "Was that the late chaplain's last will?"

Praxedis laughed merrily. "He was a pleasant and peace-loving man, the late Master Vincentius. 'Comfort and rest are better than many a pound of silver,' was what he often said. But my lady the Duchess worried him a good deal with her questions. One day she was wanting to know about the stars; the next about herbs and medicine; the day after, about the Holy Bible and the traditions of the church. 'What have you studied for, if you can not tell me anything?' she would say, and Master Vincentius's patience was often sorely tried."

Praxedis pointed archly to her forehead.

"'In the middle of Asia,' he often replied, 'there is a black marble stone; and he who can lift it

## Ekkehard

knows everything and need not ask any more questions.' He was from Bavaria, Master Vincentius, and I suppose that he wrote down the quotation from the Scripture to console himself."

"Does the Duchess ask so many questions?" said Ekkehard absently.

"That you will soon find out for yourself," replied Praxedis.

Ekkehard examined the books on the shelves. "I am sorry for the pigeons, but they will have to go."

"Why?"

"They have spoiled the whole of the first book on the Gallic wars; and the epistle to the Corinthians is hopelessly and irreparably damaged."

"Is that a great loss?" asked Praxedis.

"A very great loss!"

"Oh, you naughty doves," said Praxedis jestingly. "Come to me, before yonder pious man drives you out among the hawks and falcons;" and she called to the birds which had quietly remained in their niche. And when they did not come, she threw a ball of white worsted on the table; the male dove flew toward it, believing that it was a new dove. With stately steps he approached the white ball, greeting it with a gentle cooing; and when Praxedis snatched it up, the bird flew on her head.

Then she began to sing softly a Greek melody.

## Ekkehard

It was the song of the old yet ever young singer of Teos.

"Tell me, thou pretty birdie,  
Tell me from whence thou comest,  
And whence the balmy fragrance  
Which from thy snowy pinions  
Drips down upon the meadow;  
Who art thou? And what wilt thou?"

Ekkehard started up with surprise from the codex in which he was reading, and threw an almost frightened look on the young girl. If his eye had been more accustomed to see natural grace and beauty, it would probably have rested somewhat longer on the Greek maid. The dove had hopped upon her hand, and she lifted it up with a bended arm. Anacreon's old countryman, who out of a block of Parian marble created the Venus of Knidos, would have fixed the picture in his memory if he had witnessed it.

"What are you singing?" asked Ekkehard; "it sounds like a foreign language."

"Why should it not be foreign?"

"Greek?"

"And why should I not sing Greek?" pertly rejoined Praxedis.

"By the lyre of Homer," exclaimed Ekkehard, full of surprise, "where in the name of wonder did you learn that, the highest aim of our scholars?"

## Ekkehard

"At home," quietly replied Praxedis.

Ekkehard cast another look full of shy respect and admiration at her. While reading Aristotle and Plato he had hardly remembered that any living persons still spoke the Greek tongue. The idea now dawned upon him that something was here embodied before him, that in spite of all his spiritual and worldly wisdom was beyond his reach and understanding.

"I thought I had come as a teacher to the Hohenwiel," said he almost humbly, "and I find my master here. Would you not now and then deign to bestow a grain of your mother-tongue on me?"

"On condition that you will not drive away the doves," replied Praxedis. "You can easily have a grating put up before the niche, so that they do not fly about your head."

"For the sake of pure Greek—" Ekkehard was beginning to say, when the door opened, and the sharp voice of Dame Hadwig was heard.

"What are you talking here about doves and pure Greek? Does it take so much time to look at four walls? Well, Master Ekkehard, does the den suit your taste?"

He bowed in the affirmative.

"Then it shall be cleaned and put in order," continued Dame Hadwig. "Be quick, Praxedis, and see about it—and to begin with, let us drive away these doves!"



## Ekkehard

Ekkehard ventured to put in a word on their behalf.

"Indeed!" said the Duchess, "you desire to be alone, and yet wish to keep doves! Shall we perhaps hang a lute on the wall, and strew rose-leaves into your wine? Well, they shall not be driven out; but they shall appear roasted on our suppertable this evening."

Praxedis appeared to hear nothing of all this.

"And what was that about the pure Greek?" inquired the Duchess. And Ekkehard simply told her the favor he had asked of Praxedis. Upon this, the frown returned to Dame Hadwig's forehead. "If you are so very anxious to learn," said she, "you can ask me; for I also speak that language." Ekkehard made no objection, for in her speech there was a certain sharpness which cut off all replies. The Duchess was strict and punctual in everything. A day or two after Ekkehard's arrival she worked out a plan for learning the Latin language, and so it was settled that they should devote one hour each day to the grammar, and another to the reading of Virgil. This latter was looked forward to with great pleasure by Ekkehard. He intended to apply the whole of his faculties to the new study and to summon up all his erudition and knowledge in order to make the task easy to the Duchess.

"It is certainly no useless work which the old

## Ekkehard

poets have left behind," he said. "How difficult it would be to learn a language if it were bequeathed to us merely through a dictionary, like corn in a sack, which we should first have to grind into flour, and then to make into bread. Now the poet puts everything in its right place, and the whole is clothed in harmonious forms; so that what otherwise would prove a hard and tough matter for our teeth we can now drink in like honey-dew."

To mitigate the bitterness of the grammar Ekkehard could find no means. Every day he wrote a task for the Duchess on parchment, and she proved a very eager and industrious pupil; for each morning when the sun rose over the Lake of Constance, and cast its early rays on the Hohen-twiel, she stood already at her window, learning her task, silently or aloud as might be. Once her monotonous reciting of *amo, amas, amat*, reached even Ekkehard's ear in his chamber.

Poor Praxedis was heavily afflicted, since the Duchess, to heighten her own zeal, ordered her to learn always the same task as herself, which she considered a great nuisance. Dame Hadwig, only a beginner, delighted in correcting her hand-maiden, and was never so pleased as when Praxedis took a substantive for an adjective, or conjugated an irregular verb as a regular one.

In the evening the Duchess came over to Ekkehard's room, where everything had to be ready for

## Ekkehard

the reading of Virgil. Praxedis accompanied her, and as no dictionary was found among the books which Master Vincentius had left behind, Praxedis, who was well versed in the art of writing, was ordered to begin to make one, as Dame Hadwig did not know much about writing. "What would be the use of priests and monks," said she, "if everybody knew the art belonging to their profession? Let the blacksmiths wield the hammer, the soldiers the sword, and the scriveners the pen, and every one stick to his own business." She had, however, practised writing her name, in capital letters, artistically entwined, so that she could affix it to all documents to which she put her seal, as ruler of the land.

Praxedis cut up a big roll of parchment into small leaves, drawing two lines on each, to make three divisions. After each lesson she wrote down the Latin words they had learned in one, the German in the next, and the Greek equivalent in the third column. This last was done by the Duchess's desire, in order to prove to Ekkehard that they had already acquired some knowledge before he came. Thus the lessons had fairly begun.

The door of Ekkehard's room, leading into the passage, was left wide open by Praxedis. He rose and was about to shut it, when the Duchess prevented him, by saying: "Do you not yet know the world?"

## Ekkehard

Ekkehard could not understand the meaning of this.

He now began to read and translate the first book of Virgil's great epic poem. Æneas the Trojan rose before their eyes; how he had wandered about for seven years on the Tyrian Sea, and what unspeakable pains it had cost him to become the founder of the Roman people. Then came the recital of Juno's anger, when she went to entreat Æolus to do her bidding, promising the fairest of her nymphs to the god of the winds if he would destroy the Trojan ships. Then came thunderstorms, tempests, and dire shipwrecks—turbulent waves scattering weapons and armor, beams and rafters, of what had once been the stately fleet of the Trojans. And the roar of the excited waves reaches the ears of Neptune himself, who, rising from his watery depths, beholds the dire confusion. The winds of Æolus are ignominiously sent home; the rebellious waves settle down; and the remaining ships anchor on the Libyan shores. . . .

So far Ekkehard had read and translated. His voice was full and sonorous, and vibrating with emotion; for he perfectly understood what he had read. It was getting late; the lamp was flickering in its socket, and Dame Hadwig rose from her seat to go.

"How does my gracious mistress like the tale of the heathen poet?" asked Ekkehard.

"I will tell you to-morrow," was the reply.

## Ekkehard

To be sure, she might have said it there and then; for the impression of what she had heard was already fixed in her mind; but she refrained from doing so, not liking to hurt his feelings.

"May you have pleasant dreams," she called out as he was departing.

Ekkehard went up to Vincentius's room in the tower, which had been restored to perfect order; all traces of the doves having been removed. He wanted to pray and meditate, as he was wont to do in the monastery, but his head began to burn and before his soul stood the lofty figure of the Duchess; and when he looked straight at her, then Praxedis's black eyes also peeped at him from over her mistress's shoulders. What was to be the end of all this?

He went to the window, where the fresh autumn air cooled his forehead, and looked out at the dark, vast sky, stretching out over the silent earth. The stars twinkled brightly, some nearer, some farther off, more or less brilliant. He had never before enjoyed such an extensive view of the starry firmament; for on the top of the mountains the appearance and size of things change much. For a long time he stood thus, until he began to shiver; and he felt as if the stars were attracting him upward, and that he must rise toward them as on wings. . . . He closed the window, crossed himself, and went to seek his resting-place.

## Ekkehard

On the next day Dame Hadwig came with Praxedis to take her grammar lesson. She had learned many words and declensions, and knew her task well; but she was absent-minded withal.

"Did you dream anything?" she asked her teacher when the lesson was over.

"No."

"Nor yesterday?"

"Neither."

"'Tis a pity, for it is said that what we dream the first night in a new domicile comes true. Now confess, are you not a very awkward young man?" she continued after a short pause.

"I?" asked Ekkehard, greatly surprised.

"As you hold constant intercourse with the poets, why did you not invent some graceful dream, and tell it me? Poetry and dreams, 'tis all the same, and it would have given me pleasure."

"If such is your command," said Ekkehard, "I will do so the next time you ask me; even if I have dreamt nothing."

Such conversations were entirely new and mystical to Ekkehard. "You still owe me your opinion of Virgil," said he.

"Well," returned Dame Hadwig, "if I had been a queen in Roman lands, I do not know whether I should not have burned the poem, and imposed eternal silence on the man . . ."

Ekkehard stared at her, full of amazement.

## Ekkehard

"I am perfectly serious about it," continued she, "and do you wish to know why? Because he reviles the gods of his country. I paid great attention when you recited the speeches of Juno yesterday. That she, the wife of the chief of all the gods, feels a rankling in her mind because a Trojan shepherd boy does not declare her to be the most beautiful, and, being powerless to call up a tempest at her will to destroy a few miserable ships, must first bribe Æolus by the offer of a nymph! And then Neptune, who calls himself the king of the seas, and allows strange winds to cause a tempest in his realms, and only notices this transgression when it is wellnigh over! What is the upshot of all that? I can tell you, that in a country whose gods are thus abased and defamed, I should not like to wield the sceptre!"

Ekkehard could not very readily find an answer. All the manuscripts of the ancients were for him stable and immovable as the mountains; and he was content to read and admire what lay before him—and now such doubts!

"Pardon me, gracious lady," he said, "we have not read very far as yet, and it is to be hoped that the human beings of the Æneid will find greater favor in your eyes. Please to remember that at the time when the Emperor Augustus had his subjects counted, the light of the world began to dawn at Bethlehem. The legend says that a ray of that

## Ekkehard

light had also fallen on Virgil, which explains why the old gods could not appear so great in his eyes."

Dame Hadwig had spoken according to her first impression, but she did not intend to argue with her teacher.

"Praxedis," said she in a jesting tone, "what may thy opinion be?"

"My powers of thought are not so great," said the Greek maid. "Everything appeared to me to be so very natural; and that made me like it. And what has pleased me most was that Mistress Juno gave Æolus to one of her nymphs for a husband; for though he was somewhat elderly, he was, after all, king of the winds, and she must certainly have been well provided for."

"Certainly," said Dame Hadwig, making a sign to her to be silent. "'Tis well that we have learned in what way waiting-women can appreciate Virgil."

Ekkehard was only provoked into greater zeal by the Duchess's contradiction. With enthusiasm he read, on the following evening, how the pious Æneas goes out to seek the Libyan land; and how he meets his mother Venus, dressed in the habit and armor of a Spartan maid, the light bow hanging over her shoulder, and her fair heaving bosom scarcely hidden by the looped-up garment; and how she directs her son's steps toward the Libyan princess. Further he read how Æneas recognizes



## Ekkehard

his divine mother, but too late, calling after her in vain; but how she wraps him up in a mist, so that he can reach the new town unseen, where the Tyrian queen is building a splendid temple in honor of Juno. There he stands transfixed with admiration, gazing at the representation of the battles before Troy, painted by the hand of the artist; and his soul is refreshed by the recollections of past battles.

And now Dido, the mistress of the land, herself approaches, urging on the workmen, and performing her sovereign's duties.

"And at the gate of the temple, in Juno's honor erected,  
There on her throne sat the queen, surrounded by arm-  
bearing warriors,  
Dealing out justice to all, and dividing the labors  
amongst them  
With an impartial hand, allotting his share to each  
one . . ."

"Read that over again," said the Duchess. Ekkehard complied with her wish.

"Is it written thus in the book?" asked she. "I should not have objected if you had put in these lines yourself; for I almost fancied I heard a description of my own government. Yes, with the human beings of your poet I am well satisfied."

"It was no doubt easier to describe them than

## Ekkehard

the gods," said Ekkehard. "There are so many men in this world . . ."

She made him a sign to continue. So he read on, how the companions of Æneas came, to implore her protection, and how they sung their leader's praise, who, hidden by a cloud, stood close by. And Dido opens her town to the helpless ones; and the wish arises in her, that Æneas their king might also be thrown by the raging waves on her shores, so that the hero feels a great longing to break through the cloud that is veiling him.

But when Ekkehard began with:

"Scarce had she uttered this wish, when the veiling cloud floated backward . . ."

a heavy tread was heard, and the next moment, in came Master Spazzo the chamberlain, wanting to have a look at the Duchess taking her lesson. Most likely he had been sitting with the wine-jug before him, for his eyes were staring vacantly, and the speech of salutation died on his lips. It was not his fault though; for quite early in the morning, he had felt his nose burn and itch dreadfully, and that is an unmistakable sign of a tipsy evening to come.

"Stop there," cried the Duchess, "and you, Ekkehard, continue!"

He read on with his clear, expressive voice:

## Ekkehard

"Showing Æneas himself, in all the bloom of his beauty,  
High and lofty withal, godlike, for the heavenly mother  
Having with soft, flowing locks and glorious features  
endowed him,

Breathing into his eyes sereneness and radiance forever:  
Like as the ivory may, by dexterous hands, be embellished,  
Or as the Parian stone, encircled by red, golden fillets.  
Then he, addressing the queen, to the wonder of all the  
surrounders,

Suddenly turned and said: 'Behold, then, him you were  
seeking,

Me, the Trojan Æneas, escaped from the Libyan  
breakers.' "

Master Spazzo stood there, in utter confusion,  
while an arch smile played around the lips of  
Praxedis.

"When you honor us next with your presence,"  
called out the Duchess, "please to choose a more  
suitable moment for your entrance, so that we may  
not be tempted to imagine you to be 'the Trojan  
Æneas, escaped from the Libyan breakers'!"

Master Spazzo quickly withdrew, muttering:  
"The Trojan Æneas? Has another Rhinelandish  
adventurer forged some mythical pedigree for him-  
self? Troy—and clouds floating backward? . . .  
Wait, Æneas the Trojan; when we two meet,  
we shall break a lance together! Death and  
damnation!"

# Ekkehard

## CHAPTER VIII

### AUDIFAX

AT that time, there also lived on the Hohentwiel a boy whose name was Audifax. He was the child of a bondman, and had lost both his parents early in life. He had grown up like a wild mountain-ash, and nobody cared much about him. He belonged to the castle, as the house-leek did that grew on the roof, or the ivy which had fastened its tendrils to the walls. As he grew older he was entrusted with the care of the goats; and this office he fulfilled faithfully enough, driving them out and home again every day. He was a shy and silent boy, with a pale face, and short-cut fair hair, for only the free-born were allowed to wear long waving locks.

In the spring, when trees and bushes put forth their new shoots, Audifax loved to sit in the open air, making himself pipes out of the young wood, and blowing thereon. It was doleful, melancholy music, and Dame Hadwig had once stood on her balcony, listening to it for hours. Probably the plaintive notes of the pipe had suited her fancy that day; for when Audifax came home with his goats in the evening, she told him to ask a favor

## Ekkehard

for himself; and he begged for a little bell for one of his favorite goats, called Blackfoot. Blackfoot got the little bell, and from that time nothing particular had broken the monotonous routine of Audifax's life. But with increasing years he became shyer, and since the last spring he had even given up blowing on his pipe. It was now late in the autumn, but the sun was shining brightly still, and he was driving his goats as usual down the rocky mountain slope; and sitting on a rock, looked out into the distance. Through the dark fir trees he could see the glittering surface of the Bodensee. All around, the trees were already wearing their autumnal colors, and the winds were playing merrily with the rustling red and yellow leaves on the ground. Heaving a deep sigh, Audifax after a while began to cry bitterly.

At that time, a little girl, whose name was Hadumoth, was minding the geese and ducks belonging to the castle poultry yard. She was the daughter of an old maid-servant, and had never seen her father. This Hadumoth was a very good little girl, with bright red cheeks and blue eyes; and she wore her hair in two tresses falling down on her shoulders. The geese were kept in excellent order and training, and though they would stick out their long necks sometimes, and cackle like foolish women, not one of them dared to disobey its mistress; and when she waved her hazel wand they

## Ekkehard

all went quietly and decently along, refraining from useless noise. Often they picked their herbs in company with the goats of Audifax; for Hadumoth rather liked the short-haired goatherd, and often sat beside him; and the two looked up together at the blue sky; and the animals soon found out the friendly feelings between their guardians, and consequently were friendly also.

At that moment Hadumoth was likewise coming down the hill with her geese, and on hearing the tinkling of the goat-bells, she looked about for the driver. Then she beheld him sitting on the stone in his distress; and going up to him, sat down by his side and said: "Audifax, what makes thee cry?"

But the boy gave no answer. Then Hadumoth put her arm round his shoulders, drew his little smooth head toward her, and said sorrowfully: "Audifax, if thou criest, I must cry also."

Then Audifax tried to dry his tears, saying: "Thou needest not cry, but I must. There is something within me that makes me cry."

"What is in thee? tell me," she urged him.

Then he took one of the stones, such as were lying about plentifully, and threw it on the other stones. The stone was thin and produced a ringing sound.

"Didst thou hear it?"

"Yes," replied Hadumoth, "it sounded just as usual."

## Ekkehard

"Hast thou also understood the sound?"

"No."

"Ah, but I understand it, and therefore I must cry," said Audifax. "It is now many weeks ago that I sat in yonder valley on a rock. There it first came to me. I can not tell thee how, but it must have come from the depths below; and since then I feel as if my eyes and ears were quite changed, and in my hands I sometimes see glittering sparks. Whenever I walk over the fields I hear it murmuring under my feet, as if there were some hidden spring; and when I stand by the rocks I see the veins running through them; and down below I hear a hammering and digging, and that must come from the dwarfs, of which my grandfather has told me many a time. And sometimes I even see a red glowing light shining through the earth. . . . Hadumoth, I must find some great treasure, and because I can not find it, therefore I cry."

Hadumoth made the sign of the cross, and then said: "Thou must have been bewitched somehow, Audifax. Perhaps thou hast slept after sunset on the ground in the open air; and thus one of the goblins below has got power over thee. Wait, I know something better than crying."

She ran up the hill, speedily returning with a small cup full of water, and a bit of soap, which Praxedis had once given her, as well as some

## Ekkehard

straws. Then she made a good lather, and giving one of the straws to Audifax, she said: "There, let us make soap-bubbles, as we used to do. Dost thou remember, when we made them last time, how they always grew bigger and more beautifully colored; and how they flew down the valley, glittering like the rainbow, and how we almost cried when they burst?"

Audifax had taken the straw without saying a word, and had blown a fine bubble, which, fresh like a dew-drop, was hanging at the end of the straw; and he held it up into the air to let the sun shine on it.

"Dost thou recollect, Audifax," continued the girl, "what thou saidst to me once, when we had used up all our soap-water, and it became night, with the stars all coming out? 'These are also soap-bubbles,' thou saidst, 'and the good God is sitting on a high mountain, blowing them, and He can do it better than we can.'"

"No, I do not remember that," said Audifax.

He hung down his head again, and began to cry afresh. "What must I do to find the treasure?" sobbed he.

"Be sensible," said Hadumoth; "what wouldst thou do with the treasure if thou couldst find it?"

"I should buy my liberty, and thine also; and all the land from the Duchess, mountain and all; and I should have made for thee a golden crown,



## Ekkehard

and for every goat a golden bell, and for myself a flute made of ebony and pure gold."

"Of pure gold," laughed Hadumoth. "Dost thou know what gold looks like?"

Audifax pointed with his fingers to his lips. "Canst thou keep a secret?" She nodded in the affirmative. "Then promise me with your hand." She gave him her hand.

"Now I will show you how pure gold looks," said the boy, diving into his breast-pocket, and pulling out a piece like a good-sized coin, but shaped like a cup. On it were engraven mystic, half-effaced characters. It glistened and shone brightly in the sun, and was really gold. Hadumoth balanced it on her forefinger.

"That I found in yonder field; far over there, after the thunderstorm," said Audifax. "Whenever the many-colored rainbow descends to us, there come two angels, who hold out a golden cup, so that its ends should not touch the rough and rain-drenched ground; and when it vanishes again, they leave their cups on the fields, as they can not use them twice, for fear of offending the rainbow."

Hadumoth began to believe that her companion was really destined to obtain some great treasure. "Audifax," said she, giving him back his rainbow cup, "this will not help thee. He who wants to find a treasure must know the spell. Down in the depth below they keep a good watch over their

## Ekkehard

treasures, and don't give up anything, unless they are forced to do it."

"Oh, yes, the spell!" said Audifax with tearful eyes. "If I only knew that!"

"Hast thou seen the holy man already?" asked Hadumoth.

"No."

"For some days a holy man has been in the castle, who is sure to know all spells. He has brought a great book with him, out of which he reads to the Duchess; in it is written everything; how one conquers all the spirits in air, earth, water, and fire. The tall Friderun told the men-servants; and that the Duchess had made him come to strengthen her power and to make her remain forever young and beautiful, and live to eternity."

"I will go to the holy man then," said Audifax.

"They will beat you perhaps," warned Hadumoth.

"They will not beat me," replied he. "I know something which I will give him, if he tells me the spell."

Meanwhile the evening had set in. The two children arose from their stony seat; goats and geese were collected; and then, in well organized troops, like soldiers, were driven up the hill, and into their respective sheds.

That same evening Ekkehard read out to the Duchess the end of the first book of the *Æneid*.

## Ekkehard

which had been interrupted by Master Spazzo's untimely entrance. How Dido, greatly surprised by the hero's unexpected appearance, invites him as well as his companions into her hospitable halls. Dame Hadwig gave an approving nod at the following words of Dido:

"I, by a similar fate, with many a sorrow acquainted,  
Wearily erring about, till I found a home in this country,  
Grief is no stranger to me, and has taught me to help the  
afflicted."

Then Ekkehard went on to read how Æneas sends back Achates to the ships, that he might bring the good news to Ascanius; for on him was centred all the care and affection of his father. But Dame Venus, whose head is rife with new cunning, wishes to inflame Dido's heart with love for Æneas. So she removes Ascanius to the distant Idalian groves and gives his form to the god of love, who, divesting himself of his wings, and imitating the carriage and gait of Ascanius, follows the Trojans sent to fetch him, and thus appears before the queen in her palace at Carthage.

"Often she thus can be found, with her soul in her eyes,  
gazing at him,  
Then, too, many a time, she presses him close to her  
bosom,  
Little knowing, poor queen, to what god she is giving a  
shelter.

## Ekkehard

Bent on his mother's designs, in her heart he effaces the  
image

Of Sichæus, her spouse; then tries to rekindle her  
passions,

Calling up feelings within her, which long had slumber'd forgotten."

"Stop a moment," said Dame Hadwig. "This part, I think, is again very poor, and weakly conceived."

"Poor, and weakly conceived?" asked Ekkehard.

"What need is there of Amor," she said. "Could it not happen without using cunning and deceit, and without his interference that the memory of her first husband could be effaced in the heart of a widow?"

"If a god himself made the mischief," said Ekkehard, "then Queen Dido's behavior is excused, or even justified; that, I believe, is the intention of the poet." Ekkehard probably thought this a very clever remark, but the Duchess now rose, and pointedly said: "Oh, that, of course, alters the matter! So she needed an excuse! Really that idea did not strike me! Good-night."

Proudly she stepped through the chamber, her long flowing garments rustling reproachfully.

"'Tis strange," thought Ekkehard, "but to read Virgil with women has certainly its difficulties." Further his reflections did not go.

## Ekkehard

The following day he was going over the courtyard, when Audifax the goatherd came to him, kissed the hem of his garment, and then looked up at him with beseeching eyes.

"What dost thou want?" asked Ekkehard.

"I should like to know the spell," replied Audifax timidly.

"What spell?"

"To lift the treasure out of the deeps."

"That spell I should like to know also," said Ekkehard, laughing.

"Oh, you have got it, holy man," said the boy eagerly. "Have you not got the great book, out of which you read to the Duchess in the evening?"

Ekkehard looked at him sharply. He became suspicious, remembering the way in which he had come to the Hohentwiel. "Has anybody prompted thee to interrogate me thus?"

"Yes."

"Who?"

Then Audifax began to cry, and sobbed out, "Hadumoth."

Ekkehard did not understand him. "And who is Hadumoth?"

"The goose-girl," faltered the boy.

"Thou art a foolish boy, who ought to mind his business."

But Audifax did not go.

"You are not to give it me for nothing," said

## Ekkehard

he. "I will show you something very pretty. There must be many treasures in the mountain. I know one, but it is not the right one; and I should so like to find the right one!"

Ekkehard's attention was roused. "Show me what thou knowest." Audifax pointed downward; and Ekkehard, going out of the courtyard, followed him down the hill. On the back of the mountain, where one beholds the fir-clad Hohenstoffeln and Hohenhöwen, Audifax quitted the path, and went into the bushes toward a high wall of gray rocks.

Audifax pushed aside the opposing branches, and tearing away the moss, showed him a yellow vein, as broad as a finger, running through the gray stone. The boy then managed to break off a bit of the yellow substance, which stuck in the chinks of the rock, like petrified drops. In the bright gold-colored mass, small opal crystals, in reddish white globules, were scattered.

Closely examining it, Ekkehard looked at the detached piece, which was unknown to him. It was no precious stone. Learned men in later years gave it the name of natrolite.

"Do you see now that I know something?" said Audifax.

"But what shall I do with it?" inquired Ekkehard.

"That you must know better than I. You can

## Ekkehard

have them polished, and adorn your great books with them. Will you now give me the spell?"

Ekkehard could not help laughing at the boy. "Thou oughtest to become a miner," he said, turning to go.

But Audifax held him fast by his garment.

"No, you must first teach me something out of your book."

"What shall I teach you?"

"The most powerful charm."

An inclination to allow himself an innocent joke now came into Ekkehard's serious mind. "Come along with me then, and thou shalt have the most powerful charm."

Joyfully Audifax went with him. Then Ekkehard laughingly told him the following words out of Virgil:

"Auri sacra fames, quid non mortalia cogis pectora?"

With stubborn patience, Audifax repeated the foreign words over and over again, until he had fixed them in his memory.

"Please to write it down, that I may wear it on me," he now entreated.

Ekkehard, wishing to complete the joke, wrote the words on a thin strip of parchment, and gave it to the boy, who, gleefully hiding it in his breast-pocket, again kissed his garment, and then darted

## Ekkehard

off, with innumerable mad gambols, outrivaling the merriest of his goats.

"This child holds Virgil in greater honor than the Duchess," thought Ekkehard to himself.

At noontide Audifax was again sitting on his rock; but this time there were no tears glistening in his timid eyes. For the first time, after a long while, his pipe was taken out, and the wind carried its notes into the valley, where they reached his friend Hadumoth, who came over at once, and gaily asked him: "Shall we make soap-bubbles again?"

"I will make no more soap-bubbles," said Audifax, and resumed his pipe-blowing; but after a while he looked about carefully, and then drawing Hadumoth quite close to him, he whispered in her ear, his eyes glistening strangely: "I have been to see the holy man. This night we will seek the treasure. Thou must go with me." Hadumoth readily promised.

In the servants' hall the supper was finished; and now they all rose from their benches at the same time and arranged themselves in a long file. At the bottom stood Audifax and Hadumoth, and it was the latter who used to say the prayers before these rough but well-meaning folks. Her voice was rather trembling this time.

Before the table had been cleared two shadows glided out by the yet unlocked gate. They belonged to Hadumoth and Audifax, the latter going



## Ekkehard

on before. "The night will be cold," he said, throwing a long-haired goatskin over her.

On the southern side where the mountain wall is steepest there was an old rampart. Here Audifax stopped, as it afforded them a shelter against the keen night-wind of autumn. He stretched out his arm and said: "I think this must be the place. We have yet to wait a long time till midnight."

Hadumoth said nothing. The two children sat down side by side. The moon had risen, and sent her trembling light through airy, scattered cloud-lets. In the castle some windows were lighted up; the monk and the Duchess were again reading out of their Virgil. Everything was quiet and motionless around; only at rare intervals the hoarse shriek of an owl was heard. After a long while Hadumoth timidly said: "How will it be, Audifax?"

"I don't know," was the answer. "Somebody will come and bring it; or the earth will open, and we must descend; or—"

"Be quiet; I am frightened."

After another long interval, during which Hadumoth had slumbered peacefully, her head resting on Audifax's bosom, the latter, rubbing his eyes hard to drive away sleepiness, now awakened his companion.

"Hadumoth," said he, "the night is long; wilt thou not tell me something?"

"Something evil has come into my mind," re-

## Ekkehard

plied she. "There was once a man who went out in the early morning, at sunrise, to plow his field; and there he found the gold-dwarf, standing in a furrow and grinning at him, who spoke thus: 'Take me with you. He who does not seek us shall have us; but he who seeketh us we strangle. . . .' Audifax, I am so frightened."

"Give me thy hand," said Audifax, "and have courage."

The lights on the castle had all died out. The hollow bugle-notes of the watchman on the tower announced midnight. Then Audifax knelt down, and Hadumoth beside him. The former had taken off his wooden shoe from his right foot, so that the naked sole touched the dark earth. The parchment strip he held in his hand, and with a clear, firm voice he pronounced the words, the meaning of which he did not understand:

*"Auri sacra fames, quid non mortalia cogis pectora."*

He remembered them well. And on their knees the two remained, waiting for that which was to come. But there came neither dwarf nor giant, and the ground did not open either. The stars over their heads glittered coldly, and the chill night-air blew into their faces. Yet a faith so strong and deep as that of the two children ought not to be laughed at, even if it can not remove mountains or bring up treasures from the deep.

## Ekkehard

Now a strange light was seen on the firmament. A shooting-star, marking its way by a trailing line of light, fell down, followed by many others. "It is coming from above," whispered Audifax, convulsively pressing the little maiden to his side. "*Auri sacra fames . . .*" he called out once more into the night. Then the golden lines crossed each other, and soon one meteor after another became extinguished, and everything in the sky was again quiet as before.

Audifax looked with anxious eyes around; then he rose sorrowfully, and said in faltering tones: "'Tis nothing; they have fallen into the lake. They grudge us everything. We shall remain poor."

"Hast thou said the words which the holy man gave thee quite right?"

"Exactly so as he taught me."

"Then he has not told thee the right spell. Probably he wants to find the treasure for himself. Perhaps he has put a net in the place where the stars fell down."

"No, I don't believe that," said Audifax. "His face is mild and good, and his lips are not deceitful."

Hadumoth was thoughtful.

"Perhaps he does not know the right words?"

"Why not?"

"Because he has not got the right God. He

## Ekkehard

prays to the new God. The old gods were great and strong also."

Audifax pressed his fingers on the lips of his companion. "Be silent."

"I am no longer afraid," said Hadumoth. "I know some one else who knows all about spells and charms."

"Who is it?"

Hadumoth pointed to a steep, dark mountain opposite. "The woman of the wood," replied she.

"The woman of the wood?" repeated Audifax aghast. "She who made the great thunderstorm when the hailstones fell as big as pigeon's eggs into the fields, and who has eaten up the Count of Hilzingen, who never returned home?"

"Just on account of that. We will ask her. The castle will still be closed for some hours, and the night is cold."

The little goose-girl had become bold and adventurous; for her sympathy with Audifax was great, and she wanted so much to help him to the fulfilment of his wishes. "Come," said she eagerly, "if thou art frightened in the dark wood, thou canst blow on thy pipe; and the birds will answer thee, for it will soon be dawn."

Audifax did not raise any further objection. So they walked on northward, through the dark fir wood. They both knew the path well. Not a human creature was stirring about; only an old fox,

## Ekkehard

lying in ambush for some rabbit or partridge, caught sight of them, and was as little satisfied with their appearance as they had been with the shooting-stars. Foxes also have to bear their disappointments in life; therefore it drew in its tail and hid itself in the bushes.

The two children had gone on for about an hour, when they reached the top of the Hohenkrähen. Hidden among trees, there stood a small stone hut, before which they stopped. "The dog is sure to bark," said Hadumoth. But no bark was heard. They approached nearer and saw that the door stood wide open.

"The woman of the wood is gone," they said. But on the high rock on the Hohenkrähen, a small fire was still faintly burning; and dark shadows could be seen gliding about it. Then the children crept along the steep path leading up to the rock.

The first gleam of the coming dawn was already visible over the Bodensee. The path was very narrow, and a projecting piece of rock, over which a mighty oak tree spread out its branches, hid the fire from their view. There Audifax and Hadumoth cowered down and peeped round the corner. Then they saw that some big animal had been killed. A head, apparently that of a horse, was nailed to the stem of the oak; and weapons as well as a quantity of bones lay scattered about, while a vase filled with blood stood beside the fire.

## Ekkehard

Around a roughly hewn piece of rock, serving as a table, a number of men were sitting. On it stood a big kettle of beer, out of which they filled and refilled their stone jugs.

At the foot of the oak sat a woman, who was certainly not so lovely as the Allemannic virgin Bissula, who inflamed the heart of the Roman statesman Ausonius, in spite of his age, to such a degree that he went about in his prefecture declaiming poetry in her praise: "Her eyes are blue as the color of the Heavens, and like gold is her wavy hair. Superior to all the dolls of Latium is she, a child of the barbarians; and he who wants to paint her must blend the rose with the lily." The woman on the Hohenkrähen was old and haggard.

The men were looking at her, while the dawn was rapidly spreading in the east. The mists hanging over the Bodensee began to move, and now the sun was casting his first rays on the hills, burnishing their tops with gold. The fiery ball itself had just risen on the horizon, when the woman jumped up, the men following her example. She swung a bunch of mistletoe and fir-tree branches over her head, and then, dipping it into the vase, three times sprinkled the bloody drops toward the sun, three times also over the men, and then poured out the contents of the vase at the foot of the tree.

The men all seized their jugs, and rubbing them in a monotonous way three times on the smooth

## Ekkehard

surface of the rock, to produce a strange humming noise, lifted them together toward the sun, and then drained them at one draft. The putting them down again sounded like one single blow, so simultaneous was the movement. After this every one put on his mantle, and then they all went silently down hill.

It was the first night of November.

When all had become quiet again, the children stepped out of their hiding-place, and confronted the old woman. Audifax had taken out the slip of parchment, but the hag, snatching up a brand out of the fire, approached them with a threatening look, so that the children hastily turned round and fled down the hill as fast as their feet could carry them.

## CHAPTER IX

### THE WOMAN OF THE WOOD

AUDIFAX and Hadumoth had returned to the castle on the Hohentwiel without anybody having noticed their having made this night expedition. They did not speak of their adventures, even to each other; but Audifax brooded over them night and day. He became rather negligent in his duties, so that one of his flock got lost in the hilly ground near where the Rhine flows out of the Bodensee. So Audifax went to look for the goat;

## Ekkehard

and after spending a whole day in the pursuit, he triumphantly returned with the truant in the evening.

Hadumoth welcomed him joyfully, delighted at his success, which saved him from a whipping. By and by the winter came, and the animals remained in their respective stalls. One day the two children were sitting alone before the fireplace in the servants' hall.

"Dost thou still think of the treasure and the spell?" said Hadumoth.

Then Audifax drew closer to her and whispered mysteriously: "The holy man has, after all, got the right God."

"Why so?" asked Hadumoth. He ran away to his chamber, where, hidden in the straw of his mattress, were a number of different stones. He took out one of these and brought it to her.

"Look here," he said. It was a piece of gray mica-slate, containing the remains of a fish; the delicate outlines of which were clearly visible. "That's what I found at the foot of the Schiener mountain when I went to look for the goat. That must come from the great flood, which Father Vincentius once preached about; and this flood the Lord of Heaven and Earth sent over the world when He told Noah to build the big ship. Of all this the woman of the wood knows nothing."

Hadumoth became thoughtful. "Then it must



## Ekkehard

be her fault that the stars did not fall into our lap. Let us go and complain of her to the holy man."

So they went to Ekkehard, and told him all that they had beheld that night on the Hohenkrähen. He listened kindly to their tale, which he repeated to the Duchess in the evening. Dame Hadwig smiled.

"They have a peculiar state, my faithful subjects," said she. "Everywhere handsome churches have been erected, in which the Gospel is preached to them. Fine church music, great festivals, and processions through the waving corn-fields, with cross and flag at their head—all this does not content them. So they must needs sit on their mountain-tops on cold, chilly nights, not understanding what they're about, except that they drink beer. 'Tis really wonderful. What do you think of the matter, pious Master Ekkehard?"

"It is superstition," replied he, "which the Evil One sows in weak and rebellious hearts. I have read in our books about the doings of the heathens, how they perform their idolatrous rites in dark woods, by lonely wells, and even at the graves of their dead."

"But they are no longer heathens," said Dame Hadwig. "They are all baptized and belong to some parish church. But nevertheless some of the old traditions still live among them; and though these have lost their meaning, they yet run through

## Ekkehard

their thoughts and actions, as the Rhine does in winter, flowing noiselessly on, under the icy cover of the Bodensee. What would you do with them?"

"Annihilate them," said Ekkehard. "He who forsakes his Christian faith and breaks the vows of his baptism shall be eternally damned."

"Not so fast, my young zealot!" continued Dame Hadwig. "My good Hegau people are not to lose their heads because they prefer sitting on the cold top of the Hohenkrähen, on the first night of November, to lying on their straw mattresses. For all that they do their duties well enough, and fought under Charlemagne against the heathenish Saxons, as if every one of them had been a chosen combatant of the Church itself."

"With the Devil there can be no peace," cried Ekkehard hotly. "Are you going to be lukewarm in your faith, noble Mistress?"

"In reigning over a country," returned she with a slight sarcasm in her voice, "one learns a good deal that is not written down in books. Don't you know that a weak man is often more easily defeated by his own weakness than by the sharpness of the sword? When the holy Gallus one day visited the ruins of Bregenz, he found the altar of St. Aurelia destroyed, and in its place three metal idols erected; and around the great beer-kettle the men sat drinking; for this is a ceremony which is never omitted when our Suabians wish to show their

## Ekkehard

piety in the old fashion. The holy Gallus did not hurt a single man among them; but he cut their idols to pieces, threw them into the green waves of the lake, and made a large hole into their beer-kettle. On this very spot he preached the Gospel to them, and when they saw that no fire fell down from the heavens to destroy him, they were convinced that their gods were powerless, and so became converted. So you see that to be sensible is not to be lukewarm."

"That was in those times," began Ekkehard, but Dame Hadwig continued: "And now the Church has been established from the source of the Rhine to the North Sea, and, far stronger than the ancient castles of the Romans, a chain of monasteries, fortresses of the Christian faith, runs through the land. Even into the recesses of the Black Forest the Gospel has penetrated; so why should we wage war so fiercely against the miserable stragglers of the olden times?"

"Then you had better reward them," said Ekkehard bitterly.

"Reward them?" quoth the Duchess. "Between the one and the other there is still many an expedient left. Perhaps it were better if we put a stop to these nightly trespasses. No realm can be powerful in which two different creeds exist, for that leads to internal warfare, which is rather dangerous as long as there are plenty of outward enemies.

## Ekkehard

Besides, the laws of the land have forbidden them these follies, and they must find out that our ordinances and prohibitions are not to be tampered with in that way."

Ekkehard did not seem to be satisfied yet; a shadow of displeasure being still visible on his countenance.

"Tell me," continued the Duchess, "what is your opinion of witchcraft in general?"

"Witchcraft," said Ekkehard seriously, taking a deep breath, which seemed to denote the intention of indulging in a longer speech than usual—"witchcraft is a damnable art, by which human beings make treaties with the demons inhabiting the elements, whose workings in nature are everywhere traceable, rendering them subservient by these compacts. Even in lifeless things there are latent living powers, which we neither hear nor see, but which often tempt careless and unguarded minds to wish to know more and to attain greater power than is granted to a faithful servant of the Lord. That is the old sorcery of the serpent; and he who holds communion with the powers of darkness may obtain part of their power, but he reigns over the devils by Beelzebub himself, and becomes his property, when his time is at an end. Therefore witchcraft is as old as sin itself, and instead of the one true faith, the belief in the Trinity reigning paramount, fortune-tellers and interpreters of

## Ekkehard

dreams, wandering actors and expounders of riddles, still infest the world; and their partizans are to be found above all among the daughters of Eve."

"You are really getting polite!" exclaimed Dame Hadwig.

"For the minds of women," continued Ekkehard, "have in all times been curious and eager to attain forbidden knowledge. As we shall proceed with our reading of Virgil, you will see the excess of witchcraft embodied in a woman called Circe, who passed her days, singing, on a rocky headland. Burning chips of sweet-scented cedar-wood lighten up her dark chambers, where she is industriously throwing the shuttle, and weaving beautiful tapestry; but **outside** in the yard is heard the melancholy roaring of lions and tigers, as well as the grunting of swine, which were formerly men whom, by administering to them her potent magic philtres, she has changed into brutes."

"I declare, you are talking like a book," said the Duchess pointedly. "You really ought to extend your study of witchcraft. To-morrow you shall ride over to the Hohenkrähen and find out whether the woman of the wood is a Circe also. We give you full authority to act in our name, and are truly curious to ascertain what your wisdom will decree."

"It is not for me to reign over a people and

## Ekkehard

to settle the affairs of this world," replied he evasively.

"That we shall see," said Duchess Hadwig. "I do not think that the power of commanding has ever embarrassed any one, least of all a son of the Church."

So Ekkehard submitted, the more readily as the commission was a proof of confidence on her part. Early the next morning he rode over to the Hohenkrähen on horseback, taking Audifax with him, to show him the way.

"A happy journey, Sir Chancellor!" called out a laughing voice behind him. It was the voice of Praxedis.

They soon reached the old hag's dwelling, which was a stone hut built on a projecting part of the high rock, about half-way up. Mighty oaks and beech-trees spread their boughs over it, hiding the summit of the Hohenkrähen. Three high stone steps led into the inside, which was a dark but airy chamber. On the floor there lay heaps of dried herbs, giving out a strong fragrance. Three bleached horses' skulls grinned down fantastically from the walls, while beneath them hung the huge antlers of a stag. In the door-post was cut a double, intricate triangle; and on the floor, a tame woodpecker and a raven with cropped wings were hopping about.

The inhabitant of this abode was seated beside

## Ekkehard

the flickering fire on the hearth, sewing some garment. By her side stood a high, roughly hewn, weather-beaten stone. From time to time she bent down to the hearth and held out her meagre hand over the coals; for the cold of November was beginning to be felt, especially on the mountains. The boughs of an old beech tree came almost into the room through the window. A faint breeze was stirring them; and the leaves, being withered and sere, trembled and fell off, a few of them falling right into the chamber.

The woman of the wood was old and lonely, and probably suffering from the cold.

"There you are lying now, despised and faded and dead," she said to the leaves; "and I am like you." A peculiar expression now came to her old wrinkled face. She was thinking of former times, when she also had been young and blooming, and had had a sweetheart of her own. But his fate had driven him far away from his native fir woods. Plundering Normans, coming up the Rhine, robbing and burning wherever they came, had carried him off as a prisoner, like so many others; and he had stayed with them more than a year, and had become a seaman, and in the rough sea-air he had got to be rough and hard also. When at last they gave him his liberty, and he returned to his Sva-bian woods, he still carried with him the longing for the North Sea, and pined for his wild sailor

## Ekkehard

life. The home-faces were no longer pleasant to his eyes, those of the monks and priests least of all; and as misfortune would have it, in the heat of passion he slew a monk who had upbraided him, so that he could no longer remain in his home.

The thoughts of the old woman were constantly recurring that day to the hour when he had parted from her forever. Then the servants of the judge led him to his cottage in the wood of Weiterdingen, and exacted six hundred shillings from him, as a fine for the man he had slain. Then he had to swear a great oath that, besides his cottage and acre, he had nothing left, either above or underground.

After that he went into his house, took a handful of earth, and threw it with his left hand over his shoulder at his father's brother, for a sign that his debt was thus to pass on to this his only remaining relation by blood. That done, he seized his staff, and, clad in his linen shirt, without shoes or girdle, he jumped over the fence of his acre, for such was the custom, and thus he became a homeless wanderer, free to go out into the wilderness. So he went back to Denmark to his own Northmen, and never returned any more. All that had ever reached her was a dark rumor that he had gone over with them to Seeland, where the brave seakings, refusing to adopt the Christian faith with its new laws, had founded a new home for themselves.

All this had happened long, long ago; but the



## Ekkehard

old woman remembered it all, as if it were but yesterday that she had seen her Friduhelm going away from her forever. Then she had hung up a garland of vervain at the little chapel of Weiterdingen, shedding many tears over it; and never had another lover been able to efface his image from her heart. The cold dreary November weather reminded her of an old Norman song which he had once taught her and which she now hummed to herself:

“The evening comes, and winter is near,  
The hoar-frost on fir trees is lying;  
Oh book, and cross and prayers of monk—  
How soon shall we all be a-dying!

“Our homes are getting so dusky and old  
And the holy wells desecrated,  
Thou god-inhabited, beautiful wood,  
Wilt thou, even thou be prostrated?

“And silent we go, a defeated tribe,  
Whose stars are all dying and sinking,  
Oh Iceland, thou icy rock in the sea,  
With thee our fates we'll be linking.

“Arise and receive our wandering race,  
Which is coming to thee, and bringing  
The ancient gods and the ancient rites,  
To which our hearts are still clinging.

## Ekkehard

“Where the fiery hill is shedding its light,  
And the breakers are shoreward sweeping,  
On thee, thou defiant end of the world!  
Our last long watch we’ll be keeping.”

Ekkehard meanwhile had got down from the saddle and tied his horse to a neighboring fir tree. He now stepped over the threshold, shyly followed by Audifax.

The woman of the wood threw the garment she had been working at over the stone, folded her hands on her lap, and looked fixedly at the intruder in his monk’s habit, but did not get up.

“Praised be Jesus Christ,” said Ekkehard, by way of greeting, and also to avert any possible spell. Instinctively he drew in the thumb of his right hand, doubling his fingers over it, being afraid of the evil eye and its powers. Audifax had told him how people said that with one look she could wither up a whole meadow. She did not return his greeting.

“What are you doing there?” began Ekkehard.

“I am mending an old garment that is getting worn,” was the answer.

“You have been also gathering herbs?”

“I have. Are you an herb-gatherer? Here are many of them, if you wish for any. Hawk-weed and snail-clover, goat’s-beard and mouse-ear, as well as dried woodruff.”

## Ekkehard

"I am no herb-gatherer," said Ekkehard. "What use do you make of those herbs?"

"Need you be asking what is the use of herbs?" said the old woman. "Such as you know that well enough. It would fare ill with sick people and sick hearts, and with our protection against nightly sprites, as well as the stillings of lovers' longings, if there were no herbs to be had!"

"And have you been baptized?" continued Ekkehard.

"Ay, they will have baptized me, likely enough."

"And if you have been baptized," he said, raising his voice, "and have renounced the devil with all his works and allurements, what is the meaning of all this?" He pointed with his stick toward the horses' skulls on the wall, and giving a violent push to one, caused it to fall down on the floor, where it broke to pieces, so that the white teeth rolled about on the ground.

"The skull of a horse," quietly replied the old woman, "which you have shivered to pieces. It was a young animal, as you may see by the teeth."

"And you like to eat horse-flesh?"

"It is no impure animal, nor is it forbidden to eat it."

"Woman!" cried Ekkehard, approaching her closer, "thou exercisest witchcraft and sorcery!"

Then she arose and with a frowning brow and strangely glittering eyes she said: "You wear a

## Ekkehard

priest's garment, so you may say this to me; for an old woman has no protection against such as you. Otherwise it were a grave insult which you have cast on me, and the laws of the land punish those that use such words. . . ."

During this conversation, Audifax had remained timidly standing at the door, but when the raven now made its way toward him, he was afraid and ran up to Ekkehard; from thence he saw the stone by the hearth, and walked up to it; for the fear even of twenty ravens would not have prevented him from examining a curious stone. Lifting the garment which was spread over it, he beheld some strange, weather-beaten figures carved on it.

At that moment Ekkehard's eye fell also on the stone. It was a Roman altar, and had doubtless been erected on those heights by cohorts, who at the command of their Emperor had left their camp in luxurious Asia for the inhospitable shores of the Bodensee. A youth, in a flowing mantle and with Phrygian cap, was kneeling on a prostrate bull—the Persian god of light, Mithras, who gave new hope and strength to the fast sinking faith of the Romans.

An inscription was nowhere visible. For a considerable time Ekkehard stood examining it; for with the exception of a golden coin bearing the head of Vespasian, which had been found

## Ekkehard

in the moor at Rapperswyl by some dependents of the monastery, and some carved stones among the church treasures, his eye had never before beheld any carving of the olden times; but from the shape and look of the thing he guessed at its being some silent witness of a bygone world.

"Whence comes the stone?" asked he.

"I have been questioned more than enough now," defiantly said the old woman. "Find an answer for yourself."

The stone might have said a good deal for itself, if stones were gifted with speech, for a goodly piece of history often clings to such old and weather-beaten ruins. What do they teach us? That the races of men come and go like the leaves, that spring produces and autumn destroys, and that all their thinkings and doings last but a short span of time. After them there come others, talking in other tongues and creating other forms. That which was holy before is then pulled down and despised, and that which was condemned becomes holy in its place. New gods mount the throne, and it is well if their altars are not erected on the bodies of too many victims.

Ekkehard saw another meaning in the stone's being in the hut of the woman of the wood.

"You worship that man on the bull!" he cried vehemently. The old woman took up a stick standing by the fireplace, and with a knife made

## Ekkehard

two notches in it. "'Tis the second insult you have offered me," she said hoarsely. "What have we to do with yonder stone image?"

"Then speak out. How is it that the stone comes to be here?"

"Because we took pity on it," replied she. "You, who wear the tonsure and monk's habit, probably will not understand that. The stone stood outside, on yonder projecting rock, which must have been a consecrated spot on which many have knelt, probably, in the olden times. But in the present days nobody heeded it. The people hereabout dried their crab-apples, or split their wood on it, just as it suited them; and the cruel rain has been washing away the figures. 'The sight of the stone grieves me,' said my mother one day. 'It was once something holy, but the bones of those who have known and worshiped the man on it have long been bleached white, and the man in the flowing mantle looks as if he were freezing with the cold.' So we took it up, and placed it beside the hearth, and it has never harmed us as yet. We know how the old gods feel when their altars are shattered; for ours also have been dethroned. You need not begrudge its rest to the old stone."

"Your gods?" said Ekkehard. "Who are your gods?"

"That you ought to know best, for you have driven them away, and banished them into the

## Ekkehard

depths of the lake. In the floods below, everything has been buried. The ancient rites and the ancient gods! We can see them no more, and know but the places where our fathers have worshiped them, before the Franks and the cowl-bearing men had come. But when the winds are shaking the tops of yonder oak tree, you may hear their wailing voices in the air; and on consecrated nights there is a moaning and roaring in the forest, and a shining of lights, while serpents are winding themselves round the stems of the trees; and over the mountains you hear a rustling of wings, of despairing spirits, that have come to look at their ancient home."

Ekkehard crossed himself.

"I tell it thus as I know it," continued the old woman. "I do not wish to offend the Saviour, but he has come as a stranger into the land. You serve him in a foreign tongue, which we can not understand. If he had sprung up from our own ground, then we might talk to him and should be his most faithful worshipers, and maybe things would then fare better in Allemannia."

"Woman!" cried Ekkehard wrathfully, "we will have thee burned . . ."

"If it be written in your books that trees grow up to burn old women with, very well. I have lived long enough. The lightning has lately paid a visit to the woman of the wood"—pointing to

## Ekkehard

a dark stripe on the wall—"the lightning has spared the old woman."

After this she cowered down before the hearth, and remained there motionless like a statue. The flickering coals threw a fitful, varying light on her wrinkled face.

"'Tis well," said Ekkehard as he left the chamber. Audifax was very glad when he could see the blue sky again over his head. "There they sat together," said he, pointing upward.

"I will go and look at it, while thou goest back to the Hohentwiel and sendest over two men with axes. And tell Ottfried, the deacon of Singen, to come and bring his stole and mass-book with him."

Audifax bounded away, while Ekkehard went up to the top of the Hohenkrähen.

In the castle on the Hohentwiel, the Duchess had been sitting meanwhile taking her midday meal. She had often looked about, as if something were missing. The meal was soon over, and when Dame Hadwig found herself alone with Praxedis she began:

"How dost thou like our new teacher, Praxedis?"

The Greek maid smiled.

"Speak," said the Duchess in a commanding voice.

"Well, I have seen many a schoolmaster before this at Constantinopolis," said Praxedis flippantly.



## Ekkehard

Dame Hadwig threatened her with her finger. "I shall have to banish thee from my sight, if thou indulgest in such irreverent speeches. What hast thou to say against schoolmasters?"

"Pardon me," said Praxedis. "I did not mean any offense. But whenever I see such a bookman, wearing such a very serious expression, and assuming such an important air, drawing out of his manuscript some meaning which we have already nearly guessed; and when I see how he is bound up in his parchments, his eyes seeing nothing but dead letters, having scarcely a look to spare for the human beings around him—then I always feel strongly tempted to laugh. When I am in doubt whether pity would be the proper feeling, I take to laughing. And he certainly does not require my pity, as he knows so much more than I do."

"A teacher must be serious," said the Duchess. "Seriousness belongs to him, as the snow does to our Alps."

"Serious—ah well! in this land where the snow covers the mountain-peaks, everything must be serious," resumed the Greek maid. "If I were only as learned as Master Ekkehard to be able to express all that I want to say! I mean that one can learn many things jestingly, without the sweat-drops of hard labor on one's brow. All that is beautiful ought to please, and be true, at the same time. I mean that knowledge is like honey, which

## Ekkehard

can be got at in different ways. The butterfly hovers over the flowers and finds it; but such a learned German appears to me like a bear, which clumsily puts his paws into a bee-hive and then licks them. I for my part don't admire bears."

"Thou art a frivolous-minded maiden and not fond of learning. But how does Ekkehard please thee otherwise? I think him very handsome."

Praxedis looked up at her mistress. "I have never yet looked at a monk to see whether he were handsome."

"Why not?"

"Because I thought it quite unnecessary."

"Thou givest queer answers to-day," said Dame Hadwig, getting up from her seat. She stepped to the window and looked out northward, where from the dark fir trees rose the heavy mass of the steep, rocky Hohenkrähen.

"The goat-boy has just been here, and has told some of the men to go over," said Praxedis.

"The afternoon is mild and sunny," observed the Duchess. "Tell them to saddle the horses and we will ride over, and see what they are doing. Ah! I forgot that thou complainedst of the fatigue of riding, when we returned from St. Gallus. So I will go there alone. . . ."

Ekkehard meanwhile had inspected the scene of the nightly revel, of which but few traces remained. The earth around the oak-tree was still

## Ekkehard

wet and reddish looking, and a few coals and ashes indicated where the fire had been.

With astonishment he beheld here and there, hanging in the branches of the oak, small wax effigies of human limbs. There were feet and hands, as well as images of cows and horses—offerings for the recovery of sick men and beasts, which the superstitious peasantry preferred hanging up on old consecrated trees to placing them on the altars of churches.

Two men, with axes, now came up.

"We have been ordered to come here," they said.

"From the Hohentwiel?" asked Ekkehard.

"We belong to the Duchess, but we live yonder on the Hohenhöwen, where you can see the smoke rise from the charcoal-pile."

"Good," said Ekkehard. "You are to cut down this oak for me."

The men looked at him. Embarrassment was visible in their faces.

"Begin at once, and make haste, for before nightfall the tree must be felled to the ground."

Then the two men walked up to the oak. With gaping mouths they stood before the magnificent tree. One of them let his ax fall.

"Don't you know the spot, Chomuli?" quoth he to his companion.

"How should I know it, Woveli?"

## Ekkehard

The former pointed toward the east, and, lifting one of his hands to his mouth, imitated the act of drinking. "On account of that, Chomuli."

Then the other looked downhill where Ekkehard was standing, and, winking cunningly with one eye, said: "We know nothing, Woveli."

"But he will know, Chomuli."

"That remains to be seen," was the reply.

"It is really a sin and a shame," continued the other. "That oak is at least two hundred years old, and has lived to witness many a bright May-day and autumn-fire. I really can't do it."

"Don't be a fool," said his companion, making the first stroke. "The more readily we hew away at the tree the less yonder monk will believe that we have sat under its branches in nightly worship. Remember the shilling fine! A man must be cautious, Woveli!"

This last remark did not fail to have its effect. "Yes, a man must be cautious," he repeated, aiming a blow at the tree of his devotion. But ten days ago he had hung up a wax effigy himself, in order to cure his brown cow of fever.

The chips flew about, and, keeping regular time, their blows quickly followed each other.

The deacon of Singen had also arrived with stole and mass-book. Ekkehard beckoned to him to go with him into the hut of the woman of the wood. She was still sitting motionless as before,

## Ekkehard

beside her hearth. A sharp gust of wind, entering as the door opened, extinguished her fire.

"Woman of the wood," called out Ekkehard imperiously, "put your house in order and pack up your things, for you must go!"

The old woman seized her staff and cut a third notch. "Who is it that is insulting me for the third time," growled she, "and who wishes to cast me out of my mother's house, like a stray dog?"

"In the name of the Duchess of Suabia," continued Ekkehard solemnly, "and on account of your practising heathenish superstitions, and nightly idolatries, I banish you herewith from house and home; and bid you leave the land. Your chair shall be placed before the door of your hut, and you shall wander unceasingly, as far as the sky is blue and Christians visit the church; as far as the falcon flies on a day of spring when the wind is carrying him along, faster than his wings. No hospitable door shall be opened to you; no fire be lighted to give you warmth; and may the wells deny you water, until you have renounced the powers of darkness, and made your peace with the almighty God, the judge of the living and dead."

The woman of the wood had listened to him, without showing great emotion.

"An anointed man will insult thee three times under thine own roof," muttered she, "and thou shalt make a sign on thy staff, in witness of this; and

## Ekkehard

with that same staff thou shalt go out toward the setting sun, for they will not give thee sufficient ground to rest thy head upon. Oh mother! My mother!"

She then scraped her scanty belongings together, making a bundle of them, and, taking her staff, prepared herself to go. The heart of the deacon of Singen was touched. "Pray God through his servants to have mercy on you, and perform some Christian penance," he said, "so that you may find forgiveness."

"For that, the woman of the wood is too old," she replied. Then she called her woodpecker, which flew about her head; the raven followed, with a scared, frightened look, and she had already opened the door and cast back one last look on the walls and fireplace, the herbs and horses' skulls, when she struck her stick violently on the threshold, so as to make the stone flags resound. "Be cursed, ye dogs!" cried she; then, followed by her birds, she took the path leading into the woods, and disappeared.

"And silent we go, a defeated tribe,  
Whose stars are all dying and sinking,  
Oh Iceland, thou icy rock in the sea,  
With thee our fates we'll be linking!"

was her low chant, slowly dying away among the leafless trees.

## Ekkehard

Ekkehard now put on the stole; and the deacon of Singen carrying the mass-book before him, they proceeded through chamber and closet. The walls were sanctified by the sign of the cross, so as to banish the evil spirits forever; and finally, with prayers, he pronounced a mighty exorcism over the place.

The pious work had lasted long; and when the deacon took off Ekkehard's stole, the cold sweat-drops stood on his brow, as he had never before heard such impressive words. Just when all was over, the tramping of horses' feet was heard.

It was the Duchess, accompanied by one servant only. Ekkehard went out to meet her; and the deacon directed his steps homeward.

"You were so long away that I had to come hither myself to see how you had settled everything," graciously called out the Duchess.

The two wood-cutters had in the meanwhile finished their job, and made their retreat by the back of the hill. They stood in awe of the Duchess. Ekkehard then told her about the life and doings of the woman of the wood, and how he had driven her away.

"You are very severe," said Dame Hadwig.

"I thought I was very mild," replied Ekkehard.

"Well, we approve of that which you have done. What do you intend to do with the deserted hut?" casting a hasty look at the stone walls.

## Ekkehard

"The power of the evil spirits has been banished and exorcised," said Ekkehard. "I mean to consecrate it as a chapel to St. Hadwig."

The Duchess looked at him with a well-pleased expression.

"How did you hit upon that idea?"

"The thought struck me just now while I was having the oak cut down."

"We will examine that spot; and I think that we shall approve also of the felling of the oak."

She climbed the steep path leading up to the top of the Hohenkrähen, accompanied by Ekkehard.

There lay the oak on the ground, its mighty branches almost preventing their further ascent. A flat stone, but a few paces in circumference, crowned the top of the strangely shaped hill. They were standing on the rocks, which formed a declivitous wall beneath their feet. It was a giddy height, on which was neither stone nor tree for support, and the two figures stood out picturesquely against the blue sky: the monk in his dark garment and the Duchess wrapped in her bright-colored mantle. Silently they stood thus, looking at the splendid view before them. Below, the plain lay stretched out before them, through the green meadows of which the river Aach ran in serpentine lines. The roofs and gables of the houses in the valley looked like tiny dots on a map. Opposite rose darkly the proud, familiar Hohen-



## Ekkehard

twiel, blue, flat mountain-ridges rising like walls behind the mighty peak, hiding the Rhine after its escape from the Bodensee.

The Untersee with the island of Reichenau lay bathed in light; and in the far-off distance the faint outlines of gigantic mountains were visible through transparent clouds. They became clearer and clearer as the sun sank down, a golden glow surrounding them like a halo of glory—the landscape becoming softer, shadows and glittering lights melting into each other.

Dame Hadwig was touched, for her noble heart could feel and appreciate nature's beauty and grandeur. But our feelings lie very close to each other, and at that moment a certain tenderness pervaded her whole being. Her looks wandered from the snowy Alpine peaks to Ekkehard. "He is going to consecrate a chapel to St. Hadwig," something whispered within her, over and over again.

She advanced a step, as if she were afraid of becoming giddy, and, putting her right arm on Ekkehard's shoulder, leaned heavily on him, her sparkling eyes looking intently into his. "What is my friend thinking about?" said she in soft accents.

Ekkehard, who had been lost in thought, started.

"I have never before stood on such a height," said he, "and I was reminded of the passage in Scripture: 'And the devil, taking him up into

## Ekkehard

an high mountain, showed unto him all the kingdoms of the world in a moment of time. And the devil said unto him, All this will I give thee, and the glory of them . . . if thou wilt worship me. And Jesus answered and said unto him, Get thee behind me, Satan: for it is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve.' ”

With a strange look the Duchess stepped backward; the light in her eyes changing, as if she would have liked to push the monk down into the abyss.

“Ekkehard!” cried she, “you are either a child—or a fool!”

Then she turned round, and hastily and displeased descended the path. Mounting her horse, she rode back to the Hohentwiel at a gallop so furious that her servant could scarcely follow her.

Ekkehard, full of consternation, remained where he was. He passed his hand over his eyes, as if to remove a mist from before them.

When late at night he sat in his tower on the Hohentwiel, thinking of all that had happened that day, he beheld a distant gleam of fire. He looked out and saw that the fiery blaze arose from the fir trees on the Hohenkrähen. The woman of the wood had been paying her last visit to the future chapel of St. Hadwig.

# Ekkehard

## CHAPTER X

### CHRISTMAS

THE evening on the Hohenkrähen cast a gloom over the following days. Misunderstandings are not easily forgiven, least of all by him who has caused them.

For this reason Dame Hadwig spent some days in a very bad humor in her own private apartments. Grammar and Virgil both had a holiday. With Praxedis, she took up the old jest about the schoolmasters at Constantinople, seeming now to enjoy it much better. Ekkehard came to ask whether he were to continue his lessons. "I have got a toothache," said the Duchess. Expressing his regret, he attributed it to the rough autumnal weather.

Every day he asked several times how she was, which somewhat conciliated the Duchess.

"How is it," said she to Praxedis, "that a person can be of so much more real worth than he outwardly appears to possess?"

"That comes from a want of gracefulness," replied the Greek maid. "In other countries I often found the reverse; but here, people are too lazy to manifest their individuality by every movement or

## Ekkehard

word. They prefer thinking to acting, believing that the whole world must be able to read on their foreheads what is passing within."

"But we are generally so industrious," said Dame Hadwig, complacently.

"The buffaloes likewise work the livelong day," Praxedis had almost said; but she finally contented herself with merely thinking it.

Ekkehard all this time felt quite at his ease; for the idea that he had given an uncivil answer to the Duchess never struck him. He had really been thinking of that parable in Scripture and failed to see that in reply to the timid expression of a friendly liking it might not always be quite the right thing to quote Scripture. He revered the Duchess; but far more as the embodied idea of sublimity than as a woman. That sublime beings demand adoration had never struck him, and still less that even the sublimest personage is often perfectly satisfied with simple affection. That Dame Hadwig was out of spirits, he noticed, however, but he contented himself by making the general observation that intercourse with a Duchess was rather more complicated than with the brotherhood at St. Gall.

Among the books which Vincentius had left behind were the Epistles of St. Paul, which he now studied. Master Spazzo during those days put on a still haughtier mien than usual when he passed

## Ekkehard

him. Dame Hadwig soon found out that it were better to return to the old order of things.

"It was really a grand sight which we had that evening from the Hohenkrähen," said she one day to Ekkehard. "But do you know our weather-signs on the Hohentwiel? Whenever the Alps appear very distinct and near, the weather is sure to change. So we have had some bad weather since. And now we will resume our reading of Virgil."

Upon this, Ekkehard, highly pleased, went to fetch his heavy metal-bound book; and so their studies were resumed. He read and translated to his pupils the second book of the *Æneid*, about the downfall of Troy, the wooden horse, and the fearful end of Laocoon; further, of the nightly battle, Cassandra's fate, and Priamus's death; and finally of *Æneas'* flight with the aged Anchises.

With evident sympathy Dame Hadwig listened to the interesting tale. Only, with the disappearance of *Æneas'* spouse Kreüsa she was not quite satisfied.

"That he need not have told so lengthily to Queen Dido," she said; "for I much doubt whether the living woman was overpleased that he had run after the lost one so long. Lost is lost."

And now the winter was drawing near. The sky became dreary and leaden, and the distance shrouded with mists. First the mountain-peaks round about put on their snow-caps, and then valley and fields followed their example. Small

## Ekkehard

icicles fastened on the rafters under the roofs, with the intention of quietly remaining there for some months; and the old linden tree in the courtyard had for some time, like a careful and economical man who disposes of his worn-out garments to the Hebrews, shaken down its faded leaves to the winds. They made up a good heap, which was soon scattered in all directions by the merry, gamboling breezes. The bare branches of the tree were often crowded with cawing rooks, coming from the neighboring woods, and eagerly watching for a bone or crumb from the kitchen of the castle. Once, there was a raven among the sable brotherhood whose flight was heavy, as its wings were damaged; and on beholding Ekkehard, who chanced to go over the courtyard, this raven flew screeching away. It had seen the monk's habit before, and had no reason to like it.

The nights of winter are long and dark. Now and then appear the northern lights; but far brighter than these, in the hearts of men, is the remembrance of that night when angels descended to the shepherds in the fields, greeting them with:

"Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men."

On the Hohentwiel they were preparing for Christmas by getting ready all sorts of presents. The year is long, and numbers many a day in which people can show each other little kindnesses;

## Ekkehard

but the Germans like having one especial day set aside for that in particular. Therefore, before all other nations they keep up the custom of making Christmas presents. The feeling heart has its own peculiar rites.

During that time Dame Hadwig had almost put aside grammar entirely, taking to sewing and embroidery. Balls of gold thread and black silk lay about the women's apartments; and when Ekkehard once came in unawares, Praxedis rushed up, and pushed him out of the door while Dame Hadwig had some needlework in a basket.

This aroused Ekkehard's curiosity, and he arrived at the not unreasonable conclusion that some present was being made for him. Therefore he thought about returning the kindness, intending to exert his utmost powers and abilities for that purpose. So he sent word to his friend and teacher, Folkard, at St. Gall, to send him parchment, colors, and brushes, as well as some precious ink, which request was speedily fulfilled. Then Ekkehard sat up many an hour at night in his tower, pondering over a Latin composition which he wanted to dedicate to the Duchess, and which was to contain some delicate homage.

But all this was not so easy as he had thought. Once he began with the creation of the world, intending to proceed in daring flight to the beginning of Dame Hadwig's reign in Suabia; but he

## Ekkehard

had already written some hundred hexametres and had only got as far as King David; and the work would probably have taken him three years to complete. Another time he tried to number up all the women who either by their strength or their beauty had influenced the fate of nations: such as Queen Semiramis and the virgin Amazons, the heroic Judith and the tuneful Sappho; but to his great regret found out that by the time his pen had worked its way to the Duchess it would have been quite impossible to find anything new to say in her praise. So he went about downcast and distressed.

"Have you swallowed a spider, pearl of all professors?" inquired Praxedis one day, on meeting him in the aforesaid mental condition.

"You may well be jesting," said Ekkehard sadly; and under the seal of secrecy he confided his griefs to her.

"By the thirty-six thousand volumes in the library at Constantinopolis!" exclaimed she, "why, you are going to cut down a whole forest of trees, when a few flowers are all that's wanted. Why don't you make it simple and graceful, such as your beloved Virgil would have made it?" After this she ran away, and Ekkehard crept back to his chamber. "Like Virgil?" he mused. But in the whole of the *Æneid* there was no example of a similar case. He read some cantos, and dreamily sat thinking over them, when a good idea suddenly



## Ekkehard

struck him. "I've got it!" cried he. "The beloved poet himself is to do homage to her!" He then wrote a poem, as if Virgil had appeared to him, in his solitude, expressing his delight that his poetry was living again in German lands, and thanking the high-born lady for thus befriending him.

This poem Ekkehard now wished to write down on parchment, adorned by some handsome illustration. So he composed the following picture: The Duchess, with crown and sceptre, sitting on her throne, accosted by Virgil in white garments, who, inclining his bay-crowned head, advances toward her. He is leading Ekkehard, who, modestly walking by his side, as a pupil with his master, is likewise humbly bowing before her.

In the strict manner of the excellent Folkard, he first drew the sketch. He remembered a picture in a psalm-book, representing the young David before King Abimelech. Thus he arranged the figures. The Duchess he drew two fingers'-breadth higher than Virgil; and the Ekkehard of the sketch was considerably shorter than the heathen poet. Budding art, lacking other means, expressed rank and greatness outwardly.

With the figure of Virgil he succeeded tolerably well; for they had always used ancient pictures as models for their drawings at St. Gall, and he had acquired a stereotyped way of executing both drapery and outline. Likewise he succeeded with his own

## Ekkehard

portrait, in so far as he managed to draw a figure in a monk's habit, wearing a tonsure; but a terrible problem for him was the representation of a queenly woman's form, for as yet no woman's picture, not even God's holy Mother, had received admittance among the monastery's paintings. David and Abimelech, whom he was so well accustomed to, were of no help to him here, for the regal mantle scarcely came down to their knees; and he knew not how to draw it any longer. So care once more resumed its seat on his brow.

"Well, what now?" quoth Praxedis one day.

"The poem is finished," replied Ekkehard.

"Now something else is wanting."

"And what may that be?"

"I ought to know in what way women's garments cling to their tender limbs," said he in doleful accents.

"You are really saying quite wicked things, you chosen vessel of virtue," scolded Praxedis. But Ekkehard then made his difficulties known to her in a clearer way, upon which the Greek made a movement with her hand, as if to open his eyes.

"Open your eyes," she said, "and look at the living things around you."

The advice was simple enough, and yet entirely novel to one who had acquired all his skill in art in his solitary cell. Ekkehard cast a long and scrutinizing look at his counselor. "It avails me

## Ekkehard

nothing," said he, "for you do not wear a regal mantle."

Then the Greek took pity on the doubt-beset artist. "Wait," said she, "the Duchess is downstairs in the garden, so I can put on her ducal mantle, and you will be helped." She glided out, and after a few minutes reappeared with the purple mantle hanging negligently from her shoulders. With slow, measured steps she walked through the chamber. On a table stood a metal candlestick, which she seized, and held up like a sceptre; and thus, with head thrown back, she stood before the monk.

He had taken out his pencil and parchment. "Turn round a little more toward the light," said he, beginning at once to draw eagerly.

Every time, however, when he looked at his graceful model, she darted a sparkling look at him. His movements became slower, and Praxedis looked toward the window. "But as our rival in the realm," began she with an artificially raised voice, "is already leaving the courtyard, threatening to take us by surprise, we command you on pain of losing your head to finish your drawing within the next minute."

"I thank you," said Ekkehard, putting down his pencil.

Praxedis stepped up to him, and, bending forward, looked at what he had done. "What shame-

## Ekkehard

ful treason!" exclaimed she, "why, the picture has no head!"

"I merely wanted the drapery," said Ekkehard.

"Well, you have forfeited a great piece of good fortune," continued Praxedis in her former tone. "If you had faithfully portrayed the features, who knows whether we should not have made you Patriarch of Constantinopolis, as a sign of our princely favor?"

Steps were now heard outside. Praxedis quickly tore off the mantle from her shoulders, so that it dropped on her arm, just as the Duchess was standing before them.

"Are you again learning Greek?" said she reproachfully to Ekkehard.

"I have shown him the precious sardonyx in the clasp of my mistress's mantle; it is such a beautifully cut head," said Praxedis. "Master Ekkehard has much taste for antiquities, and he was greatly pleased with the stone."

Even Audifax made his preparations for Christmas. His hope of finding treasures being greatly diminished, he now confined himself to the actual things around him. Often he descended at night-time to the shores of the river Aach, which slowly flowed on toward the lake. Close to the rotten little bridge stood a hollow willow-tree, before which Audifax lay in ambush many an hour, his raised stick directed toward the opening in the tree. He

## Ekkehard

was on the lookout for an otter. But no philosopher trying to fathom the last cause of Being ever found his task such a difficult one as Audifax did his otter-hunting; for from the hollow tree there was still many a subterranean outlet to the river which the otter knew and Audifax did not. And often when Audifax, trembling with cold, said, "Now it must come," he would hear a noise far up in the river, caused by his friend the otter putting its snout out of the water to take a good breath of air; and when Audifax softly crept up to the place from whence the sound had come, the otter was lying on its back, and floating comfortably down the river.

In the kitchen on the Hohentwiel there was great bustle and activity—such as there is in the tent of a commander-in-chief on the eve of a battle. Dame Hadwig herself stood among the serving maidens. She did not wear her ducal mantle, but a white apron, and stood distributing flour and honey for the gingerbread. Praxedis was mixing ginger, pepper, and cinnamon to flavor the paste with.

"What shape shall we take?" asked she. "The square with the serpents?"

"No, the big heart is prettier," said Dame Hadwig. So the gingerbread was made in the shape of hearts, and the finest was stuck with almonds and cardamom by the Duchess's own hand.

## Ekkehard

One morning Audifax entered the kitchen, half frozen with cold, and crept up to the fireplace. His lips trembled as in a fever; but he seemed to be merry, and in high spirits. "Get ready, my boy," said Praxedis, "for this afternoon thou must go to the forest and hew down a fir tree."

"That is none of my business," proudly said Audifax; "but I will do it, if you will also do me a favor."

"And what does Master Goatherd desire?" asked Praxedis.

Audifax ran out, and on returning, triumphantly held up a dark-brown otter's skin, glossy and soft to the touch.

"Where did you get that from?" asked Praxedis.

"I caught it myself," replied Audifax, looking with sparkling eyes at his booty. "You are to make a fur cap out of it for Hadumoth."

The Greek maid, who liked the boy well, promised to fulfil his request.

The Christmas tree was brought home, and adorned with apples and wax-lights. The Duchess arranged everything in the great hall. A man from Stein on the Rhine had arrived and brought a basket, tightly sewed up in linen. He said that it was from St. Gall, and destined for Master Ekkehard. Dame Hadwig had the basket put unopened on the table with the other gifts.

Christmas eve had arrived. All the inhabitants

## Ekkehard

of the castle were assembled, dressed in their best; for on that day there was to be no distinction between masters and servants. Ekkehard read them the story of Christ's nativity; and then they all went, two and two, into the great hall. There the Christmas tree, with its many candles, lighted up the room splendidly. The last to enter were Audifax and Hadumoth. A little bit of tinsel, with which the nuts had been gilt, lay on the threshold. Audifax took it up. "That has fallen off from the wings of the Christ-child," whispered Hadumoth.

On large tables were laid out the presents for the serving people: a piece of linen, or cloth, and some cakes. They rejoiced at the generosity of their mistress, which was not always so manifest. And, truly, beside the share allotted to Hadumoth, lay the fur cap. She cried when Praxedis betrayed the giver to her. "I have nothing for thee, Audifax," said she.

"It is instead of the golden crown," he whispered.

Men and maid-servants then offered their thanks to the Duchess, and went down again to the servants' hall. Dame Hadwig, taking Ekkehard by the hand, led him to a little table apart. "This is meant for you," said she.

Between the almond-covered, gingerbread heart and the basket there lay a handsome velvet priest's cap and a magnificent stole. Fringe and ground-

## Ekkehard

work were of gold thread; the embroideries were of black silk, interwoven with pearls—grand enough for a bishop.

“Let me see how it becomes you,” said Praxedis, and in spite of their ecclesiastical character she put the cap on his head, and threw the stole over his shoulders. Ekkehard cast down his eyes. “Splendid!” exclaimed she. “You may offer your thanks!”

Shyly Ekkehard put down the consecrated gifts, and then, drawing the parchment roll from out his ample garment, he timidly presented it to the Duchess. Dame Hadwig held it unopened in her hand. “First we must open the basket,” she said. “The best”—smilingly pointing to the parchment—“must come last.”

So they cut open the basket. Buried in hay, and well preserved by winter’s cold, there lay a huge mountain-cock. Ekkehard lifted it up. With outspread wings, it measured above six feet. A letter accompanied this magnificent piece of feathered game.

“Read it aloud!” said the Duchess, whose curiosity was aroused. Ekkehard, breaking the clumsy seal, then read as follows:

“To the venerable Brother Ekkehard, on the Hohentwiel, through Burkhard the cloister-pupil, from Romeias the gatekeeper:

“If there were two of them, one would be for



## Ekkehard

you; but as I have not been lucky enough to get two, this one is not for you, and yours will come later. It is sent to you, on account of not knowing her name; but she was with the Duchess in the monastery on that day, and wore a dress of the color of the green woodpecker; and her tresses were fastened round her head.

“For her the bird on account of continual thinking, on the part of him who shot it, of the walk to the recluses. It must be well macerated and roasted, because otherwise tough. In case of other guests, she is herself to eat the white flesh on the backbone, because that is the best, the brown often having a resinous taste.

“With it, I wish her all blessings and happiness. To you venerable brother, likewise. If on your castle were wanting a watchman, porter, or game-keeper, you might recommend Romeias to the Duchess; he, on account of being mocked at by the steward, and of the complaints of that dragon, Wiborad, would gladly change service. Practise in the office of gatekeeper, both giving admittance and pitching out of strange visitors, can be testified to. The same with regard to hunting. He is already now looking toward the Hohentwiel, as if a cord were drawing him thither.—Long life to you and to the Lady Duchess. Farewell!”

A merry peal of laughter followed the reading of this curious epistle. Praxedis had blushed all

## Ekkehard

over. "That is a bad reward," angrily exclaimed she, "that you write letters in other people's name, to insult me!"

"Stop," said Ekkehard, "why should the letter not be genuine?"

"It would not be the first that was forged by a monk," was Praxedis's bitter reply. "Why need you laugh at that rough sportsman? He was by no means so bad!"

"Praxedis, be reasonable!" urged the Duchess. "Look at that mountain-cock; that has not been shot in the Hegau; and Ekkehard writes a somewhat different hand. Shall we give the petitioner a place on the Hohentwiel?"

"Pray don't!" cried Praxedis eagerly. "Nobody is to believe that—"

"Very well," said Dame Hadwig, in a tone bespeaking silence. She then opened Ekkehard's parchment roll. The painting at the beginning had succeeded pretty well; and any doubt of its meaning was done away with by the superscription of the names: Hadwigis, Virgilius, and Ekkehard. A bold initial, with intricate golden arabesques, headed the poem.

The Duchess was highly pleased. Ekkehard had never before given her any proof of his skill in art. Praxedis looked with an arch smile at the purple mantle, which the Duchess wore on the picture, as if she could tell something more about it.

## Ekkehard

Dame Hadwig signed to Ekkehard to explain the poem. So he read out the following verses:

“In nightly silence sat I once alone,  
Deciphering some parchments old and deep;  
When suddenly a bright, unearthly light  
Lit up my room—’twas not the moon’s pale ray—  
And then a radiant figure did I see.  
Immortal smiles were playing round his mouth,  
And in his rich and sable-colored locks  
He wore a crown of everlasting bay.

“And with his finger pointing to the book,  
He then spoke thus: ‘Be of good cheer, my friend,  
I am no spirit, come to rob thy peace;  
I merely came to wish thee all that’s good.  
All that which the dead letters here relate  
I once have written with my own heart’s blood:  
The siege of Troy, and then Æneas’ flight,  
The wrath of Gods, and splendid Roma’s birth.

“‘Almost a thousand years have since gone by.  
The singer died, his nation died with him.  
My grave is still, but seldom do I hear  
The distant shouts at merry vintage time,  
Or roar of breakers from the Cape Misene.  
Yet lately was I call’d up from my rest  
By some rough gale, which, coming from the North,  
Brought me the tidings that in distant lands  
Æneas’ fate was being read again;  
And that a noble princess, proud and fair,

## Ekkehard

Had kindly deigned to dress my epic song  
In the bold accents of her native tongue.

“We once believed the land beyond the Alps  
Was peopled by a rough, uncultured race;  
But now at home we long have been forgot,  
And in the stranger land we live again.  
Therefore I come to offer you my thanks;  
The greatest boon a minstrel can obtain  
It is the praise from noble woman's lip.

“Hail to thy mistress, who in union rare  
Has strength and wisdom in herself enshrined,  
And, like Minerva in the ranks of Gods,  
In steel-clad armor sitteth on the throne,  
Fair patron yet of all the peaceful arts.  
Yet many years may she the sceptre wield,  
Surrounded by a strong and loving race.  
And when you listen to the foreign strains,  
Like armor rattling, and the clash of steel—  
Then think of me: it is Italia's voice,  
'Tis Virgil greets the rock of Hohentwiel.’

“Thus spake he, waved his hand and disappear'd.  
But I wrote down, still on that very night,  
What he had said; and to my mistress now  
I shyly venture to present these leaves,  
A humble gift from faithful Ekkehard.”

A short pause ensued, after he had finished the  
reading of his poem. Then the Duchess ap-

## Ekkehard

proached him with outstretched hand, saying: "Ekkehard, I thank you." They were the same words which she had once said to him in the cloister-courtyard at St. Gall; but the tones were still milder than at that time; her eyes sparkled and her lips wore a wondrous smile, like that of sweet-eyed fairies, which is said to be followed by a shower of delicious roses.

Then turning to Praxedis she continued: "And thee I ought to condemn to ask his pardon on thy very knees, for having but lately spoken with so little veneration of learned and godly men." But the Greek maiden's eyes sparkled archly, well knowing that without her help and advice the shy monk would scarcely have been able to attain this success.

"In future I will give him all the reverence that's due," said she. "I will even weave him a garland if you desire it."

After Ekkehard had gone up to his little chamber the two women still sat up together, and the Greek maid fetched a basin filled with water, some pieces of lead, and a metal spoon. "The lead-melting of last year has prophesied well," said she. "We could then not quite understand what the strange shape was which the lead assumed in the water; but now I am almost sure that it resembled a monk's cowl, which our castle really can boast of at present."

## Ekkehard

The Duchess had become thoughtful. She listened to hear whether Ekkehard might not be returning.

"It is nothing but an idle amusement," said she.

"If it does not please my mistress," said the Greek, "then she might order our teacher to entertain us with something better. His Virgil is no doubt a far better oracle than our lead when opened on a consecrated night, with prayers and a blessing. I wonder now, what part of his epic would foretell to us the events of the coming year."

"Be silent," said the Duchess. "He spoke but lately so severely on withcraft; he would laugh at us if—"

"Then we shall have to content ourselves with the old way," returned Praxedis, holding the spoon with the lead in it over the flame of the lamp. The lead melted and trembled; and muttering a few unintelligible words, she poured it into the water, the liquid metal making a hissing sound.

Dame Hadwig, with seeming indifference, cast a look at it, when Praxedis held the basin up to the light. Instead of dividing into fantastic shapes, the lead had formed a long-pointed drop. It glimmered faintly in Dame Hadwig's hand.

"That is another riddle for time to solve," laughed Praxedis. "The future, this time, closely resembles a pine-cone."

## Ekkehard

"Or a tear," said the Duchess seriously, leaning her head on her right hand.

A loud noise from the ground floor interrupted the further investigation of the omen. Giggling and screams of the maid-servants, rough sounds of male voices, interspersed with the shrill tones of a lute, were heard in dire confusion, coming up the passage. Respectfully but beseechingly, the flying troop of the maids stopped at the threshold. The tall Friderun could scarcely refrain from scolding; and little Hadumoth was crying audibly. A groping, fumbling step was heard behind them, and presently there appeared an uncouth figure, wrapped in a bearskin, with a painted mask, in the form of a bear's snout, snarling and growling like hungry bruin seeking for his prey. Now and then this apparition drew some inharmonious sounds from a lute, which was hanging over his shaggy shoulders, suspended on a red ribbon; but as soon as the door of the hall was thrown open, and the rustling dress of the Duchess was heard approaching, the nocturnal phantom turned round, and slowly tumbled back into the echoing passage.

The old housekeeper then began telling their mistress how they had sat merrily together, rejoicing over their presents, when the monster had come in upon them, and had first executed a dance, to his own lute playing, but how he had afterward blown out the candles, threatening the frightened

## Ekkehard

maidens with kisses and embraces, and finally becoming so wild and obstreperous that they had all been obliged to take flight.

Judging from the hoarse laughter of the bear, there was strong reason for suspecting Master Spazzo's being hidden under the shaggy fur, he, after imbibing a considerable quantity of wine, having perhaps decided to conclude his Christmas frolics in that way.

Dame Hadwig quieted her excited servants, and bade them go to bed. From the yard, however, was soon heard another cry of surprise. There they all stood in a group, steadfastly looking up at the tower; for the terrible bear had climbed up, and was now promenading on the top of it, lifting his shaggy head up to the stars, as if he wanted to send a greeting to his namesake in the firmament, the Great Bear.

The dark figure stood out in clear outlines against the pale starry sky, and his growls sounded weirdly through the silent night; but no mortal was ever told what the luminous stars revealed to the wine-clouded brain of Master Spazzo the chamberlain.

At the same midnight hour, Ekkehard knelt before the altar of the castle chapel, softly chanting the Christmas matins, as the church rules prescribed.



# Ekkehard

## CHAPTER XI

### THE OLD MAN OF THE PAGAN'S CAVE

THE remainder of the winter passed by monotonously, and in consequence slowly enough. Prayer and work, Virgil and grammar, continued as usual. Dame Hadwig had quite given up asking dangerous questions. During the Carnival, the neighboring nobility came to pay their respects to the Duchess. Those of Nellenburg and of Veringen; the old Count of Argengau with his daughters, the Guelphs from over the lake, and many others; and in those days there was much feasting, accompanied by more drinking. After that, it became lonely again on the top of the Hohentwiel.

March had come, and heavy gales blew over the land. On the first starlight night, a comet was seen in the sky; and the stork which lived comfortably on the castle gable had flown away again, a week after its return. At all these things, people shook their heads. Further, a shepherd, driving his flock past the hill, told how he had met the "army caterpillar" in large numbers, a sure sign of coming war.

## Ekkehard

A strange, uncomfortable feeling took possession of all minds. The approach of an earthquake is often felt at a considerable distance; here, by the stopping of a spring, there, by the anxious flying about of birds; and in the same way the danger of war makes itself felt beforehand.

Master Spazzo, who had bravely sat behind the wine-jug in February, now walked about with a downcast expression. "You are to do me a favor," said he one day to Ekkehard. "I have seen a dead fish in my dream, floating on its back. I wish to make my last will. The world has become old and is left standing on its last leg; and that also will soon give way. Good-by then, Firnewine! Besides, we are not very far off from the millenium, and have lived merrily enough. Perhaps the last years count double. At any rate, mankind can not go on much longer in this way. Knowledge has advanced so far, that in this one castle of Hohentwiel more than half a dozen books lie heaped up; and when a fellow gets a good thrashing, he goes up to court and makes his complaint, instead of burning down his enemy's house over his head. With such a state of affairs, the world must naturally soon come to an end."

"Who is to be your heir, if all the world is to perish?" was Ekkehard's reply.

A man of Augsburg, coming to the cloister of Reichenau, also brought evil tidings. Bishop Ul-

## Ekkehard

rich had promised a precious relic to the monastery—the right arm of the holy Theopontus, richly set in silver and precious stones. He now sent word that as the country was unsafe at present, he could not risk transmitting it.

The Abbot ordered the man to go to the Hohen-twiel, there to inform the Duchess of the state of things.

“What is the good news?” asked she, on his presenting himself.

“There’s not much good news. I would rather take away better from here. The vassalage of Suabia is up in arms, horse and foot; as many as have a sword and shield hanging on their walls are ready. They are on the march again, between the Danube and the Rhine.”

“Who?”

“The old enemies from yonder. The small fellows with the deep-set eyes and blunt noses. A good deal of our meat will be ridden tender again under their saddles this year.”

He drew out of his pocket a strangely shaped small horseshoe, with a high heel to it. “Do you know this? A little shoe, and a little steed, a crooked sabre, and arrows fleet; as quick as lightning, and never at rest; O Lord, deliver us from this pest!”

“The Huns?” exclaimed the Duchess, in startled tones.

## Ekkehard

"If you prefer to call them Hungarians, or Hungry-ones, 'tis the same to me," said the messenger. "Bishop Pilgrim sent the tidings from Passau to Freising, whence it reached us. They have already swum the Danube, and will be falling like locusts into the German lands; and they are as quick as winged devils. 'You may sooner catch the wind on the plain, or the bird in the air,' is an old saying with us. May the plague take their horses!"

"It is impossible!" said Dame Hadwig. "Can they have forgotten already what answer the messengers of the Exchequer returned them: 'We have iron and swords and five fingers to our hands?' At the battle by the river Inn, their heads were made acquainted with the truth of these words."

"Just for that very reason," said the man. "He who has been beaten once likes to come back and beat the enemy in his turn. The messengers of the Exchequer, in reward for their bravery, have had their heads cut off; so who will like taking their places in the front ranks?"

"We likewise know the path which has been trodden by our ancestors going to meet the enemy," proudly returned the Duchess.

She dismissed the man from Augsburg with a present. Then she sent for Ekkehard.

"Virgil will have to rest a while," said she, telling him of the danger that was threatening from

## Ekkehard

the Huns. This state of things was by no means pleasant. The nobles had forgotten, in their many personal feuds, how to act and stand up together; while the Emperor, of Saxon origin and not overfond of the Suabians, was fighting in Italy, far away from the German frontier. So the passage to the Bodensee was open to the invaders, whose mere name caused terror wherever it was pronounced. For years their tribes swarmed like will-o'-the-wisps through the unsettled realm which Charlemagne had left in the hands of incompetent successors. From the shores of the North Sea, where the ruins of Bremen spoke of their invasion, down to the southern point of Calabria, where the natives had to pay a ransom for each head, fire and plunder marked their way.

"If they are not ghosts which the pious Bishop Ulrich has seen," said the Duchess, "they are certain to come to us also; so what is to be done? Are we to meet them in open battle? Even bravery is folly when the enemy is too numerous. Are we to obtain peace by paying tribute and ransom, thus driving them over to our neighbors' territory? Others have done that before, but our ideas of honor and dishonor are different. Are we to barricade ourselves on the Hohentwiel, and leave the land at their mercy, when we have promised our protection to our subjects? Never! What do you advise?"

## Ekkehard

"My knowledge does not extend to such matters," sorrowfully replied Ekkehard.

The Duchess was excited. "Oh, schoolmaster," cried she reproachfully, "why has Heaven not made you a warrior? Many things would be better then!"

Ekkehard, deeply hurt, turned to go. The words had entered his heart like an arrow, and remained there. The reproach had some truth in it, so it hurt him all the more.

"Ekkehard," called out Dame Hadwig, "you must not go. You are to serve the country with your knowledge, and what you do not know as yet, you may learn. I will send you to some one who is well versed in these matters. Will you undertake this mission for me?"

Ekkehard had turned round again. "I never have been unwilling to serve my mistress," said he.

"But then you must not be frightened, if he gives you a rough and unfriendly reception. He has suffered many a wrong from past generations; and he does not know the present. Neither must you be shocked, if he should appear very old and repelling to you."

He had listened attentively. "I do not quite understand you . . ."

"Never mind," said the Duchess. "You are to go over to Sipplingen to-morrow, close to Ueberlingen, where the rocky shore shelves down into

## Ekkehard

the lake. These caverns were made in the olden times to serve as hiding-places. When you see the smoke of a fire rising out of the hill, go to that spot. There you will find the person I want you to see; and you must then speak with him about the Huns."

"To whom is my mistress sending me?" inquired Ekkehard, eagerly.

"To the old man of the Heidenhöhle," replied Dame Hadwig. "One does not know any other name for him hereabouts. But stop," continued she, "I must give you the watchword, in case of his refusing you admittance."

She opened a cupboard, and, searching about among her trinkets and other small things, took out a tiny slate, on which were scrawled a few letters. "That you are to say to him, besides giving him my kindest greetings."

Ekkehard looked at the slate. It contained only the two insignificant Latin words, "*neque enim!*" Nothing else.

"That has no meaning," said he.

"Never mind, the old man knows well what it means for him."

Before cockcrow the next morning, Ekkehard passed out of the gate on the Hohentwiel on horseback. The fresh morning air blew about his head, over which he now drew his hood. "Why has Heaven not made you a warrior? Many things

## Ekkehard

would be better then." These words of the Duchess accompanied him, like his own shadow. They were for him a spur to courageous resolutions. "When danger comes, she shall not find the school-master sitting behind his books," thought he.

His horse went on at a good pace. In a few hours he rode over the woody hills that separate the Untersee from the lake of Ueberlingen. At the ducal tenement of Sernatingen, the blue mirror of the lake lay stretched out before his eyes. There he left his horse in the care of the steward, and continued the path leading along the shore on foot.

At a projecting point he stopped a while to gaze at leisure at the fine view before him. The eye, here meeting with no obstacle, could glance over the waters to the distant Rhætian Alps, which, like a crystal wall, rise heavenward, forming the background of the landscape.

Where the rocks of red sandstone steeply arise out of the lake the path mounted upward. Steps hewn in the rocks made the ascent easier. Here and there apertures, serving as windows, broke the uniformity of the walls, indicating by their deep shadows the places where, in the times of the Roman supremacy, unknown men had dug these caverns as an asylum, in the same way as the catacombs.

The ascent was fatiguing enough. Now he had reached a level only a few steps in circumference,



## Ekkehard

on which young grass was growing. In front, there was an entrance into the rock, about the height of a man. Out of this there now rushed, violently barking, a huge black dog, which stopped short about two paces from Ekkehard, ready to fly at him with teeth and fangs, and keeping its eyes steadily fixed on the monk, who could not move without risk of the dog's attacking him. His position was certainly not an enviable one, retreat being impossible, and Ekkehard carrying no arms about him. So he remained motionless, facing his enemy, when at an opening there appeared the head of a man, with gray hair, piercing eyes, and a reddish beard.

"Call back the dog!" cried Ekkehard.

A few moments afterward, the gray-haired man appeared at the entrance, armed with a spear.

"Back, Mummolin!" cried he.

The huge animal reluctantly obeyed; and not until the old man had threatened it with his spear did it retreat growling.

"Your dog ought to be killed, and hung up nine feet over your door, until it fall to pieces," said Ekkehard angrily. "It nearly made me fall over into the lake," turning round, and beholding the lake lying at his feet from the perpendicular height.

"In the Heidenhöhlen the common laws have no force," defiantly replied the old man. "With

## Ekkehard

us 'tis—keep off two steps, or we split your skull."

Ekkehard wanted to go on.

"Stop there," continued the stranger, barring the passage with his spear. "Not so fast, if you please. Where are you going to?"

"To the old man of the Heidenhöhle."

"To the old man of the Heidenhöhle?" angrily repeated the other. "Have you no more respectful term for that personage, you yellow-beaked cowl-bearer?"

"I know no other name," replied Ekkehard, somewhat abashed. "My greeting is '*neque enim.*'"

"That sounds better," said the old man in a softer tone. "From whence do you come?"

"From the Hohentwiel. I am to tell you . . ."

"Stop, I am not he whom you seek. I am merely his servant Rauching. I will announce you."

Considering the appearance of those barren, rocky walls and the black dog, this formality seemed somewhat out of place. Ekkehard was kept waiting some time. It was as if preparations for his reception were being made. At last Rauching made his reappearance. "Be pleased to enter." So they walked along a dark passage that widened at the end, admitting them into a chamber which had been hewn in the rocks by human

## Ekkehard

hands, high and spacious, with an arched ceiling. A rough paneling partly covered the walls. The openings for the windows were wide and airy, showing a piece of the lake and hills, like a picture in a frame. Some bright, warm sunbeams streamed in, lighting up the otherwise dark chamber. Here and there traces of stone benches were visible; while a high-backed chair, likewise of stone, and resembling a bishop's seat in old churches, stood beside the window. Here, in the Heidenhöhle proper—the "Pagans' Cave"—was seated a strange, human form of mighty dimensions. The huge head rested heavily between the broad shoulders; forehead and cheeks were deeply furrowed. Round his temples were a few scanty white curls; while his mouth was almost entirely toothless—signs which spoke of the wondrous age of the man. Round his shoulders hung a cloak of undecided color, the back of which, hidden by the chair, was no doubt threadbare enough, the seams showing, here and there, many a patch. He wore a pair of coarse boots, and by his side lay an old hat, with a dusty old trimming of fox's fur. In a niche in the wall stood a chess-board with carved ivory pieces. A game seemed just to have been finished: the king mated by a knight, and two bishops.

"Who comes to the forgotten one?" asked the old man, in a trembling voice. Then Ekkehard,

## Ekkehard

bowing his head before him, told his name and who had sent him there.

"You have brought an evil watchword with you. Do people still speak of Luitward of Vercelli?"

"Whose soul be damned," added Rauching.

"I have never heard anything about him," said Ekkehard.

"Tell him, Rauching, who Luitward of Vercelli was. It would be a pity if he were to die in the memory of men."

"He was the greatest rascal that ever the sun shone upon," was Rauching's reply.

"Tell him also what is the meaning of '*neque enim*.'"

"There is no gratitude in this world; and of an Emperor's friends even the best is a traitor."

"Even the best is a traitor," murmured the old man, lost in thought. His eye now fell on the chess-board. "Ah, yes," muttered he faintly, "check-mated, mated by bishops and knights. . . ." He clenched his fist, and made a movement as if to rise; then, falling back with a deep sigh, he raised his shriveled hand to his forehead, resting his heavy head on it.

"The headache," said he, "the cursed headache!"

"Mummolin!" cried Rauching.

With bounding steps the black dog came in; and on seeing the old man with head bent down, he

## Ekkehard

whiningly crept up to him, and licked his forehead. "'Tis well," said the old man, after a while, lifting himself up again.

"Are you ill?" kindly asked Ekkehard.

"Ill?" rejoined he; "maybe it is a sort of illness! I have been visited by it such a long time that it seems quite like an old acquaintance. Have you ever had the headache? I advise you never to go out to battle when you are attacked by a headache and by no means to conclude a peace. It may cost you a realm, that headache. . . ."

"Could not some physician—" began Ekkehard.

"The wisdom of physicians has, in this case, long come to an end. They have done their best for me," pointing to his forehead, where two old scars crossed each other.

"Look here! If they want you to try that remedy, you must not do so. In my younger days they hung me up by the feet; then they made some cuts in my head, thus taking away some blood, and part of my brains, without helping me. At Cremona (Zedekias was the name of the Hebrew sage) they consulted the stars, and placed me on a mulberry-tree at midnight. It was a long exorcism with which they drove the headache into the tree, but it did not help me. In the German lands they ordered me to take powdered crabs' eyes, mixed with the dust of St. Mark's grave, and a draft of

## Ekkehard

sour of all the sour wines produced on the lake. Rauching waited upon them during the meal.

"Well, what may your business be?" asked the old man, when the meagre repast was ended.

"Evil tidings; the Huns are invading the country. Their hoofs will soon be treading the Suabian ground."

"Good!" cried the old man. "That serves you right. Are the Normans also approaching?"

"You speak strangely," said Ekkehard.

The eyes of the old man lighted up. "And if enemies were to spring up around you, like mushrooms, you have deserved it well; you and your masters. Rauching, fill the glass; the Huns are coming—*neque enim!* Now you will have to swallow the soup which your masters have salted for you. A great and proud empire had been founded, extending from the shores of the Ebro to the Raab in the Danish land, into which not a rat could have entered without faithful watchmen catching it. And this the great Emperor Charlemagne—"

"God bless him," exclaimed Rauching.

"—left behind him, strong and powerful. The tribes which had once put a stop to the Roman supremacy were all united as they ought to be; and in those days the Huns slyly kept behind their hedges on the Danube, the weather not being favorable for them; and as soon as they tried to

## Ekkehard

move, their wooden camp-town in Pannonia was destroyed to the last chip by the brave Franks. Later, the great ones in Germany began to feel sorely that not every one of them could be the master of the world; so each one must needs establish a government in his own territory. Sedition, rebellion, and high treason suited their tastes well; and so they dethroned the last of Charlemagne's descendants, who held the reins of the world. The representative of the unity of the realm has become a beggar who must eat unbuttered water-gruel; and now your lords, who preferred Arnulf the bastard and their own arrogance, have got the Huns on their heels, and the old times are coming back, as King Attila had them painted. Do you know the picture in the palace at Milan?

"There the Roman Emperor was painted sitting on the throne, with Scythian princes lying at his feet, till one day King Attila, chancing to ride by, gave a long and steadfast look at the picture, and laughingly said: 'Quite right; only I'll make a small alteration.' And he had his own features given to the man on the throne, those kneeling before him, pouring out bags of tributary gold, being now the Roman Cæsars. The picture is still to be seen."

"You are thinking of bygone tales," said Ekkehard.

"Of bygone tales?" exclaimed the old man. "For

## Ekkehard

me there has been nothing new these last forty years but want and misery. Bygone tales! 'Tis well for him who still remembers them, in order that he may see how the sins of the fathers are visited on the children and children's children. Do you know why Charlemagne shed tears once in his life? When they announced the arrival of the Norman pirates to him, 'As long as I live,' said he, ' 'tis mere child's play, but I grieve for my grandsons.' "

"As yet we have still an Emperor and a realm," said Ekkehard.

"Have you still one?" said the old man, draining his glass of sour Sippling wine, and shivering after it. "Well, I wish him joy. The corner-stones are dashed to pieces; and the building is crumbling away. With a clique of presumptuous nobles, no realm can exist. Those who ought to obey are lording it over the others; and he who ought to reign must wheedle and flatter, instead of commanding. Methinks I have heard of one to whom his faithful subjects sent the tribute in pebbles instead of silver, and the head of the count who was sent to collect it lay beside the stones in the bag. Who has avenged this?"

"The Emperor is fighting and gathering laurels in Italy," rejoined Ekkehard.

"Oh, Italy! Italy!" continued the old man. "That will before long become a thorn in the Ger-



## Ekkehard

man flesh. That was the only time the great Charles—”

“Whom God bless,” exclaimed Rauching.

“—allowed himself to be entrapped. It was a sad day on which they crowned him at Rome; and no one has chuckled so gleefully as he on St. Peter’s chair. He wanted our help, but what business have we with Italy? Look there! Has that heavenward mountain-wall been erected for nothing? All that lies on the other side belongs to the Byzantines; and it is right so; for Greek cunning is better there than German strength; but later generations have found nothing better to do than to perpetuate the error of Charlemagne. The good example he left them they have trampled upon; and while there was plenty to do in the East and North, they must needs run off to Italy, as if the great magnet lay behind the Roman hills. I have often thought about what could have driven us in that direction; and if it was not the Devil himself, it can only have been their good wine.”

Ekkehard had become saddened by the old man’s speeches, who, seeming to feel this, said: “Do not regard what a buried man tells you. We here in the Heidenhöhlen can not make it any better; but the truth has many a time taken up her abode in caverns, while ignorance was striding at a great pace through the land.”

“A buried man?” said Ekkehard, inquiringly.

## Ekkehard

"You may for all that drink a bumper with him," jestingly replied the mysterious stranger. "It was necessary that I should vanish from the world, for the headache and the rascals had brought me into discredit. You need not stare at me so, little monk. Sit down here on the stone bench, and I will tell you about it and you can make a song of it to play on the lute. . . . There once lived an Emperor who had few happy days, for his realm was large, and he himself was big and stout, and the headache tormented him ever since the day that he mounted the throne. Therefore he took unto himself a chancellor, who had got a fine head, and could think better than his master; for he was thin and meagre like a rail, and had no headache. The Emperor had raised him from obscure birth, for he was only the son of a blacksmith; and he bestowed favors on him, doing all that his chancellor advised him to do. Ay, he even concluded a miserable peace with the Normans; for his counselor told him that this matter was too insignificant, and that he had more important things to do than to worry himself about a handful of pirates. At the same time, the chancellor went to the Emperor's spouse, and beguiled her weak heart, playing on the lute before her. Besides this he carried off by force the daughters of some noble Allemannians; and finally joined in a league with the Emperor's enemies. And when

## Ekkehard

the Emperor at last called together a great diet, to remedy the state of affairs, his gaunt chancellor was among the foremost who spoke against him. With the words '*Neque enim*' he began his speech, and then he proved to them that they must dethrone their Emperor; and he spoke so venomously and treacherously against the peace with the Normans, which he had himself concluded, that they all fell off from their master, like withered leaves when the autumn winds are shaking the tree. And they cried that the time for the stout ones was at an end; and then and there they dethroned him; so that he who had entered Tribur with a threefold crown on his head had nothing when he went away that he could call his own but what he wore on his back; and at Mainz he sat before the Bishop's castle, glad when they presented him with a dish of soup. The brave chancellor's name was Luitward of Vercelli. May God reward him according to his deserts, and the Empress Richardis and the rest of them likewise.

"But when later the people in Suabia took pity on the poor outlaw, and gave him a little bit of land, whereby to earn a scant livelihood; and when they thought of sending an army to fight for his rights, Luitward despatched murderers against him. It was a wild night for the tenement of Neidingen; the storm was breaking the branches of the trees, and the shutters were rattling violently.

## Ekkehard

The dethroned Emperor, not being able to sleep on account of the headache, had mounted on the roof, to let the storm cool his burning forehead, when they broke in to murder him. It is not a very pleasant feeling, I can tell you, to sit in the cold night-air on the roof, with a heavy aching head, and hear how people are regretting downstairs that they can not strangle you or hang you over the well.

“He who has lived to hear that had better die at once. The stout Meginhard at Neidingen had fallen down from a tree and was killed just at the right time, so that they could lay him on the bier and spread the news in the country that the dethroned Emperor had paid his tribute to grim King Death. They say that it was a fine procession when they carried him to the Reichenau. The heavens are said to have opened, casting a ray of light on the bier; and the funeral must have been touching indeed, when they buried him on the right side of the altar. ‘That he had been stripped of his honor, and bereft of his kingdom, was a trial imposed from above, to cleanse and purify his soul, and as he bore it patiently, it is to be hoped that the Lord rewarded him with the crown of eternal life to comfort him for the earthly crown which he had lost.’ Thus they preached in the cloister-church, not knowing that he, whom they imagined they had buried, was at that same

## Ekkehard

hour entering the solitude of the Heidenhöhlen, laden with all his trifling belongings, and leaving behind him a curse against the world."

The old man laughed. "Here it is safe and quiet enough for thinking of old times. Let's drink a bumper to the dead! And Luitward has been cheated after all; for though his Emperor wears an old hat instead of a golden crown, and drinks the sour juice of the Sippling grape instead of the sparkling Rhine wine, he is still alive; while the thin ones and all their race died long ago. And the stars will prove right after all in prophesying at his birth that he would leave this false world in the roar of battle. The Huns are coming! Oh, come thou also soon, thou joyful end!"

Ekkehard had listened with the utmost attention. "O Lord, how wonderful are Thy ways," he exclaimed, attempting to kneel down and kiss the old man's hands; but he prevented him, saying: "All these things have been done away with long ago. Take an example—"

"Germany has greatly wronged you and your race," Ekkehard was beginning to say, but the old man interrupted him, saying: "Germany! I do not bear her a grudge. May she prosper and flourish, undisturbed by enemies, and find some ruler who will make her powerful again, and who will not be plagued with the headache when the Normans come back, and will not have a chancel-

## Ekkehard

lor whose name is Luitward of Vercelli. But those who have divided his garments among them, and cast lots for his vesture—”

“May Heaven punish them with fire and brimstone,” said Rauching in the background.

“And what answer shall I give to my mistress?” asked Ekkehard, after having finished his beaker.

“With regard to the Huns?” said the old man. “I believe that is simple enough. Tell the Duchess to go into the woods, and to see what the hedgehog does when an enemy is coming too near. It curls itself up into a ball and presents its prickles, and he who lays hands on it is wounded. Suabia has got plenty of lances. Let them do the same. You monks will not be the worse for carrying spears. And if your mistress wishes to know still more, then you may tell her the adage which rules in the Heidenhöhlen. Rauching, what is it?”

“Keep two steps off, or we’ll break your head,” he replied.

“And if there should be a question of peace, then tell her that the old man of the Heidenhöhle once concluded a bad one, and that he would never do so again, although his headache were as bad as ever, and that he would much rather saddle his own horse at the sound of the war-trumpet than—If you outlive his last ride, you may say a mass for him.”

## Ekkehard

The old man had spoken with a strange excitement. Suddenly his voice broke off; his breath became short, almost groaning, and, bending his head, he said: "It is coming on again."

Rauching hastily presented him with a draft of water; but the oppression did not subside.

"We must try the remedy," said Rauching. From a corner of the chamber he rolled forward a heavy block of stone, about a man's height, bearing some traces of sculpture, which they had found in the cavern—a mystic monument, belonging to former inhabitants. He placed it upright against the wall. It appeared as if a human head bearing a bishop's mitre had once been represented on it. Rauching now seized a thick, knotty stick, and, placing another in the hands of the old man, began thrashing away at the stone image, and pronouncing slowly and solemnly the following words: "Luitward of Vercelli! Traitor and adulterer, *neque enim!* Ravisher of nuns, and foul rebel, *neque enim!*" Heavily fell the blows, and a faint smile lighted up the withered features of the old man. He arose and began striking away at it also, with feeble arms.

"It has been written that a bishop must lead a blameless life," said he in the same tone as Rauching. "Take this for the peace with the Normans! This for the seduction of the Empress Richardis, *neque enim!* This for the diet at Tri-

## Ekkehard

bur, and that for the election of Arnulf! *Neque enim!*"

The cavern rang with the resounding blows, the stone image standing immovable under the fierce attacks. The old man became more and more relieved, warming himself by giving vent to the old hatred which for years had nourished his miserable life.

Ekkehard did not quite understand the meaning of what he saw. He began to feel uncomfortable, and so took his leave.

"I trust you have been enjoying yourself at the expense of the old fool up there," said the steward of Sernatingen to him, when he brought out his saddled horse. "Does he still believe that he has lost a crown and a kingdom? Ha, ha!"

Ekkehard rode away. In a beech wood the new green leaves were sprouting forth, telling of the coming spring. A young monk from the Reichenau cloister was going the same road. Bold and gay, like the clashing of arms, his song floated through the solitary wood:

"Arise, ye men of Germany, ye warriors gay;  
With warlike song, and watchman's call, drive sleep away!  
At ev'ry hour make the round, from gate to wall,  
Lest unawares the enemy upon you fall.  
From walls and towers then be heard, *eia vigila!*  
The echoes all repeating, *eia vigila!*"



## Ekkehard

It was the song which the night-guards sang at Mutina in Italy, while the Huns were attacking the town in which the Bishop resided. The young monk had himself stood on guard at the gate of St. Geminianus three years ago, and well knew the hissing of the Hunnic arrows; and when a presentiment of new battles is, so to say, in the air the old songs rise again in the minds of men.

### CHAPTER XII

#### THE APPROACH OF THE HUNS

"THE old man is right," said Dame Hadwig when Ekkehard reported to her the result of his mission. "When the enemy threatens, prepare for him, and when he attacks, beat him; that is so simple that one really need not ask advice. I believe that the habit of long thinking and wavering in critical moments has been sown by the enemy like weeds in the German lands. He who doubts is near falling; and he who misses the right moment for action often digs his own grave. We will get ready."

The exciting and dangerous position put the Duchess into high spirits, just as trout delight in rushing over rocks and stones of turbulent waters, while they sicken in a still lake. An example of

## Ekkehard

courage and energy given by one in power is never lost on inferiors. So they were all busy making preparations for the reception of the enemy. From the tower on the Hohentwiel, visible at a great distance, the war-flag floated forth upon the air; and through the woods and fields, unto the remotest farmsteads, hidden in lonely mountain glens, the war-trumpet was heard, calling together all those capable of bearing arms, poverty alone freeing any one from the military service. Every man possessing more than two acres of land was obliged to place himself under arms, and to present himself at the first call. The Hohentwiel was to be headquarters, nature herself having made it a fortress. Swift messengers were riding on horseback through the Hegau district, and people began stirring everywhere in the land. Behind the dark fir woods, the charcoal-burners had formed a corps. "This will do," said one of them, swinging a heavy poker over his head, as if about to strike down an enemy. "I will also fight with the rest of them."

At the doors of the priests, and at those of the old and sick, the messengers also knocked. They who could not fight were to pray for the others. This decree resounded through the land, reaching, too, the monastery in St. Gall.

Ekkehard likewise went to the peaceful little island of Reichenau, as the Duchess had desired. This mission would have been highly distasteful to

## Ekkehard

him, if the reason for it had been a different one. He was to take an invitation to the brotherhood to come to the Hohentwiel in case of danger.

There he found everything already in a state of excitement. The brothers were promenading beside the fountain in the mild spring air; but not one of them was seriously thinking of enjoying the fine weather and blue sky. They were talking of the evil times and holding counsel on what was to be done. The idea of leaving their quiet cells did not appear to please them at all.

"St. Mark," one of them had said, "will protect his disciples, and by striking the enemy with blindness cause them to ride past; or he will raise the waves of the Bodensee to devour them, as the Red Sea swallowed up the Egyptians."

But old Simon Bardo replied: "This calculation is not quite safe; and when a place is not fortified by towers and walls a retreat might, after all, be the better plan. Wherever a shilling's worth is still to be got, no Hun will ride by, and if you put a gold piece on the grave of a dead one, his hand will grow out of the earth to seize it."

"Holy Pirminius!" said the gardener, in doleful accents, "who then is to mind the fruits and vegetables in the garden, if we must go?"

"And the chickens?" said another, whose chief delight was in the poultry yard. "Have we bought the three dozen turkeys merely for the enemy?"

## Ekkehard

"If one were to write an impressive letter to them," proposed a third, "they surely could not be such barbarians as to harm God and His saints."

Simon Bardo, with a pitying smile, then said: "Thou hadst better become a shepherd, and drink a decoction of camomile, thou who wouldst write impressive letters to the Huns! Oh, that I had brought my old firework-maker Kedrenus with me over the Alps! Then we should cast a light on the enemy far brighter than the mild moonshine in the flower-garden, which called up such tender recollections in the soul of Abbot Walafrid. We should then sink ships and command the whole shore with our long fire-tubes. Hurrah! How they would be scattered to the winds, when our missiles would be flying through the air like fiery dragons, pouring down a rain of burning naphtha. But what do any of you know about Greek-fire? Oh, Kedrenus, thou paragon of firework-makers!"

Ekkehard had entered the monastery, and asked for the Abbot. A serving brother showed him up to his apartments; but he was neither there, nor was he to be seen anywhere else.

"He will most likely be in the armory," said a passing monk. So the serving brother led Ekkehard to the armory, which was situated high up in the tower. There, quantities of arms and harness were heaped up, with which the monastery pro-

## Ekkehard

vided its warriors who were to act with the lay vassals. Abbot Wazmann stood there, hidden by a cloud of dust. He had had the armor taken down from the walls to examine it. Dust and cobwebs bore witness to its having rested for a long while. During the examination, the Abbot had not forgotten to provide for himself. His upper garment lay on the ground before him; and in its place he had donned a coat of mail, with the help of a fair-haired cloister-pupil. He was now stretching out his arms to see whether it fitted him tightly and comfortably.

"Come nearer!" cried he, on seeing Ekkehard. "The reception is fitted to the times!"

Ekkehard then communicated the Duchess's invitation to him.

"I should have asked for this myself," replied he, "if you had not come." He had seized a long sword, and made a cut in the air with it, so that Ekkehard started back a pace or two. From the swift, whizzing sound which it produced, one could guess that the hand which held it was not unaccustomed to its use.

"Yes, 'tis getting serious," said he. "Down in Altdorf in the Shussen valley, the Huns have already effected their entrance; and we shall soon see the flames of Lindau reflected in the water. Do you also wish to choose a suitable armor for yourself? This one with the shoulder-strap will

## Ekkehard

defeat every blow or thrust as well as the finest linen shirt ever spun by a virgin in holy nights."

Ekkehard courteously declined the offer, and then went down, accompanied by the Abbot, who seemed to enjoy his coat of mail thoroughly. Throwing his brown habit over it, like a true champion of the Lord, he made his appearance among the anxious brotherhood still assembled in the garden.

"St. Mark appeared to me this night, pointing to the Hohentwiel," cried the Abbot. "Thither thou shalt bring my remains, to save them from desecration by the hands of the heathen," he said. "Be up and get ready! With prayers and fasting your souls have fought to the present moment with the Evil One; but now your fists are to prove that you are warriors indeed; for those who come are the sons of the Devil. Witches and demons begot them in the Asiatic deserts. All their doings are vile wickedness, and when their time comes they will all go back to hell!"

During this appeal, even the most careless of the brothers became convinced that danger was near. A murmur of approbation ran through their ranks; for the cultivation of science had not yet made them so effeminate but that they looked on a warlike expedition as a very desirable pastime.

With his back leaning against an apple tree stood Rudimann, the cellarer, and an ominous

## Ekkehard

frown on his forehead. Ekkehard went up to him, wishing to embrace him, as a sign that a general calamity was wiping out the old quarrel; but Rudimann, waving him off, said: "I know what you mean." Then drawing a coarse thread out of the seam of his garment, he threw it to the ground, and placed his foot on it.

"As long as a Hunnic horse is treading German ground, all enmity shall be torn out of my heart, as this thread is out of my garment; but if we both outlive the coming battles, we will take it up again, as is proper." After these words he turned round, and descended into the cellar, there to attend to important business. The large tuns lay there in the arched vaults in due order; and not one of them gave back a hollow sound when struck. Rudimann had ordered some masons, and now had a small ante-chamber, which generally served for the keeping of fruit and vegetables, arranged as if it were the cloister-cellar. Two small casks and one larger one were put there. "An enemy who finds nothing becomes suspicious," said the cellarer to himself, "and if the Sipplinger choice wine which I sacrifice only does its duty, many a Hun will find some difficulty in continuing his journey."

The masons had already got ready the square stones to wall up the inner cellar door, when Rudimann once more stepped in. Walking up to an old

## Ekkehard

rotten-looking tun, he tapped it, and filling a small jug, emptied this with a most melancholy expression; and then, folding his hands as in prayer, he said: "May God protect thee, noble red wine of Meersburg!" A solitary tear stood glistening in his eye.

In all parts of the monastery busy hands were preparing for the coming danger. In the armory the harness and arms were being divided. Unfortunately there were many heads and but few helmets. Then the leather-work was in a somewhat dilapidated condition, and stood in great need of repair.

In the treasury, the Abbot was superintending the packing up of precious articles and holy relics. Many heavy boxes were thus filled. The golden cross with the holy blood; the white marble vase, which had once held the wine at the marriage of Cana; coffins with the remains of martyrs; the Abbot's staff, and the golden pixes—all were carefully packed up and taken over to the ships. Some were also carrying off the heavy green emerald, weighing fully twenty-eight pounds.

"The emerald you may leave behind," said the Abbot.

"The parting gift of the great Emperor Charles! The rarest jewel of the cathedral, the like of which the bowels of the earth do not contain!" asked the serving brother.



## Ekkehard

"I know a glass-maker in Venetia who can easily make another if the Huns should carry this one away," carelessly replied the Abbot. So they put the jewel back into the cupboard.

Before evening had set in everything was ready for the departure. Then the Abbot commanded the brothers to assemble in the courtyard. All appeared with the exception of one.

"Where is Heribald?" asked he.

Heribald was a pious monk who had many a time cheered up a desponding brother. In his infancy, his nurse had let him fall on the stone floor, and from that time he had had a weakness of the brain, a certain softness—though he possessed an excellent heart, and took as much delight in God's beautiful world as any stronger-minded being.

So they went to look for Heribald, and found him up in his cell. The yellow-gray cloister-cat seemed to have offended him in some way, for he had fastened the cord which generally served him as a girdle round its body, and had hung it up on a nail in the ceiling. The poor old animal hung thus suspended in the air, whining and mewing pitifully, while Heribald rocked it gently to and fro, talking Latin to it.

"Come on, Heribald!" called out his companions. "We must leave the island."

"Let him fly who will," replied the idiot. "Heribald won't go away."

## Ekkehard

"Be good, Heribald, and follow us; the Abbot commands you."

Then Heribald pulled off his shoe, and held it out to the brothers. "The shoe was already torn last year," said he. "Then I went to the keeper of the stores and said: 'Give me my yearly portion of leather, that I may make myself a new pair of shoes.' But the camerarius replied: 'If thou didst not tread thy shoes all awry, then they would not tear,' and he refused the leather. Upon this, I complained to the Abbot, but he said: 'A fool, as thou art, can well go barefoot.' Now I have no decent shoes to put on; and I will not go among strangers with my torn shoes."

Such sound reasons could not well be argued away; so the brothers seized him, intending to carry him off by force; but no sooner had they reached the passage than Heribald broke away from them, and rushed as quick as lightning to the church, and from thence up the stairs that led to the belfry. When he had reached the very top, he drew up the small wooden ladder after him, so that there was no possibility of getting at him.

They reported to the Abbot how matters stood. "Well, then we must leave him behind," said he. "Children and fools are protected by a guardian angel of their own."

Two large barges lay waiting at the shore to receive the fugitives. They were strong, well-built

## Ekkehard

ships, furnished with oars and masts. In some smaller boats, the serving people, and all others who lived on the Reichenau, sailed with all their chattels and belongings. The whole looked a strange medley.

One bark, filled by the maid-servants, and commanded by Kerhildis, the upper maid, had already steered off, without its crew knowing what place they were bound for; but fear, this time, was stronger than their curiosity to see the mustaches of strange warriors.

And now the brotherhood was approaching the shore, presenting a strange sight. The greater part were armed, some chanting the litany, others carrying the coffin of St. Mark, the Abbot with Ekkehard walking at the head of the cloister-pupils. They all cast back a sorrowful look toward the home where they had spent so many years; and then they went on board.

No sooner had they faithfully started, than all the bells began to ring merrily. The weak-minded Heribald was ringing a farewell greeting to them. Afterward, he appeared on the top of the cathedral tower, and called down with a powerful voice "*dominus vobiscum*," and here and there, one of the monks responded in the accustomed way: "*et cum spiritu tuo*."

A keen breeze was curling the waves of the lake, which had only lately thawed. Numerous large

## Ekkehard

ice-blocks were still floating about, so that the ships often had great difficulty in proceeding.

The monks who were taking care of St. Mark's coffin anxiously cowered down when the waves sometimes entered their boat; but bold and erect Abbot Wazmann's tall figure towered above the rest, his habit fluttering in the wind.

"The Lord is at our head," said he, "as He was in the fiery pillar before the people of Israel. He is with us in our flight, and He will be with us in the hour of our happy return."

On a clear moonlight night the monks of the Reichenau ascended the Hohentwiel, where they found everything prepared for their reception. In the castle chapel they deposited the coffin of their saint, six of the brothers being ordered to stay beside it, watching and praying.

The courtyard, on the next morning, was transformed into a bustling bivouac. Some hundred armed vassals were already assembled, and from the Reichenau ninety more combatants were added to their numbers. They were all eagerly preparing for the coming contest. Already before sunrise the hammering of the blacksmiths awakened the sleepers. Arrows and lances were being made. Near the fountain in the yard stood the big grinding-stone, on which the rusty blades were sharpened. The old basketmaker of Weiterdingen had also been fetched up, and was sitting with his boys

## Ekkehard

under the great linden tree, covering the long boards destined for shields with a strong platting of willow branches. Over this a tanned skin was fastened, and the shield was complete. Others were seated round a merry fire, melting lead, to make sharp pointed missiles for the slings. Bludgeons and heavy clubs of ash were also being hardened in the flames. "If one of these knocks at the skull of a heathen," said Rudimann, swinging a heavy club over his head, "it is sure to be admitted."

All vassals who had served before were put under the command of Simon Bardo, the Greek field marshal. "A man who wants to pass his old days peaceably must come to Germany," he had jestingly said to the Duchess; but in reality the clatter of arms strengthened his mind like old Rhine wine. With an untiring zeal he drilled the inexperienced in the use of arms; and every day for many an hour the stone flags of the courtyard resounded with the heavy, regular tramp of the monks, who, in closed ranks, were being taught the art of a spear attack. "With you, one could verily knock down walls, when once your blood is up," said the old soldier with an approving nod.

Those of the younger men who possessed a good eye and flexible sinews were enlisted among the archers. These also practised industriously shooting at a target. Once, a loud cry of delight was

## Ekkehard

heard in the courtyard, where the jolly fellows had manufactured a straw figure, wearing a crown of owl's feathers, and holding a six-corded whip in its hand. A small piece of red cloth in the shape of a heart, fastened in front, was the mark.

"Attila, the King of the Huns!" cried the archers, "who can hit him right in the heart?"

"Boasting is easy enough," said Dame Hadwig, who was looking down from her balcony; "but though on an evil bridal night, death felled him, his spirit is still living in the world; and I fear, that even those coming after us will yet have trouble enough to banish his dread memory."

"If they could only shoot away at him as well as they do now down there," said Praxedis, when a triumphant shout was heard. The straw figure tottered and fell; an arrow having hit the heart.

Ekkehard came up to the hall. He had exercised with the others, and his face glowed with the unwonted exertion, while the helmet had left a red stripe on his forehead. In the excitement of the moment, he had forgotten to leave his lance outside the door.

Dame Hadwig stood looking at him with evident pleasure. He was no longer the timid teacher of Latin. Bowing his head before the Duchess, he said: "Our brothers in the Lord, from the Reichenau, bid me tell you that a great thirst is besetting their ranks."

## Ekkehard

Dame Hadwig laughed merrily. "Let them put a tun of cool beer in the courtyard. Until the Huns are all driven out of the country our cellarer is not to complain about the emptiness of his tuns." Then, pointing at the bustling life in the courtyard, she added: "Life, after all, brings us richer and more manifold pictures than all poets can paint. You were hardly prepared for such a change in things, eh?"

But Ekkehard would allow nothing approaching a slight to be leveled at his dear Virgilius.

"Allow me," said he, leaning on his spear; "all that we now see you will find word for word in the *Æneid*, as if there was to be nothing new under the sun. Surely you would fancy that Virgil stood here on this balcony, looking down on yonder busy crowd, when he sang, at the beginning of the war in Latium:

"Yonder the shields for the head are with willowy  
branches surrounded;

Others the armor of ore are to shining polish restoring;  
There the protecting greaves of glittering silver are  
forged.

Sickle and plow for the time are dishonored and wholly  
forgotten,

All are busily mending the rusty swords of their fathers;  
Bugles are heard in the land, and the watchword to all  
is now given."

## Ekkehard

"Yes, that really fits the situation wonderfully well," said Dame Hadwig, "but can you also predict the issue of the coming battles from your epic?" she was going to ask; but in times of such busy confusion, 'tis somewhat difficult to speak about poetry. At that moment the steward came in, to report that all the meat was eaten up, and to ask whether he might kill two more oxen.

After a few days Simon Bardo's men were so well drilled that he could let them pass in review before the Duchess; and it was high time, for they had already been disturbed in their rest the previous night. A bright red light was illuminating the sky, far over the lake. Like a fiery cloud, the dread sign hung there for several hours, the conflagration being probably far off in Helvetia, the Switzerland of to-day. The monks began to dispute about it. Some said that it was a heavenly apparition, a fiery star, sent as a warning unto all Christendom. Others said that there must be a great conflagration in the Rhine valley; and one brother, gifted with a particularly fine nose, even pretended to perceive the smell of burning. It was long past midnight when the red light died out.

On the southern declivity of the mountain, there was a moderate sized grove, where the first spring-flowers were blooming already, while the snow was still lying in the nooks and crevices of the valleys.



## Ekkehard

This was to be the place for the mustering. Dame Hadwig was seated on her noble palfrey, surrounded by a small troop of well-armed knights, who had also joined the party on the Hohentwiel: the Barons of Randegg, of Hoewen, and the gaunt Friedinger. The Abbot of Reichenau was likewise proudly sitting on his ambling nag—a well-mounted champion of the Lord. Master Spazzo, the chamberlain, was taking great pains to equal him with regard to carriage and movements, which were both highly aristocratic and knightly. Ekkehard, who was likewise to have accompanied the Duchess on horseback, had declined the honor, that he might not raise envy in the hearts of the other monks.

And now the outer castle-gate slowly opened on its heavy hinges, and out strode the archers, who with the cross-bow men headed the march. Amidst the merry sounds of music, they walked on in closed ranks, Audifax, with a very serious expression, being among the horn-blowers, in the capacity of bag-piper. Suddenly, Simon Bardo ordered a signal to be given, at the sound of which the ranks swiftly deployed, skirmishing about like a swarm of wild bees. They had soon occupied every bush and hedge in the neighborhood.

Then there came the troop of monks, firmly treading the ground, with helmets and armor under their habits, the shields hanging on their

## Ekkehard

backs. With couched lances, they were a redoutable force. Their flag floated merrily, high in the air, a red cross in a white field. They marched on as regularly as if they had been soldiers these many years; for with the strong-minded mental discipline is an excellent preparation for the warrior's life. Only one in the left wing was not able to keep pace with the others, his lance protruding beyond the straight line preserved by his companions. "It is not his fault," said Abbot Wazmann to the Duchess. "He copied a whole mass-book in the space of six weeks, so that he has got the writing-cramp in his hand."

Ekkehard was marching in the right wing, and when his troop passed the Duchess he caught a look from the radiant eyes, which could scarcely have been intended for the whole corps.

Divided into three bodies, then came the vassals and bondmen. Their musical instruments were huge bulls' horns, emitting strange, uncouth sounds, and many a singular looking weapon was seen that day which had already been used under the great Emperor Charles. Some of them were merely armed with a heavy bludgeon.

Master Spazzo's sharp eyes meanwhile looked down into the valley. "'Tis well that we are all together, and well prepared; for I verily believe that we shall soon get some work to do," said he, pointing downward in the direction where the

## Ekkehard

roofs of Hilzingen were peeping out from the wooded dells. A dark line was seen approaching. Then Simon Bardo ordered his troops to stop, and after casting a searching look in that direction, said: "These are not Huns, for they are not on horseback." Still, taking all needful precaution, he commanded his archers to occupy the foot of the hill.

As the ranks of the strangers approached, the garb of St. Benedict became visible. A golden cross, in lieu of a standard, was towering above the lances, and the "*Kyrie eleison*," was now heard quite plainly. "My brothers!" exclaimed Ekkehard. Then the ranks of the Reichenau monks broke up, and running down the hill with shouts of delight, they soon met, and were joyfully embracing each other. To renew friendship in the hour of danger makes the heart doubly glad. Arm in arm with the monks of Reichenau, the strange guests now ascended the hill, headed by their abbot, Cralo. On a heavy cart in the rear-guard they were transporting the blind Thieto.

"May God bless you, most noble cousin," said the Abbot, bowing his head before the Duchess. "Who would have thought half a year ago that we should return your call with the whole of the brotherhood? But the God of Israel says: 'Let my people leave their home, so that they may remain faithful unto me.'"

## Ekkehard

Dame Hadwig held out her hand to him, with visible emotion. "Yes, these are times of trial," said she. "You are welcome!"

Thus fortified by the new-comers, the troop betook themselves back again, behind the protecting walls of the Hohentwiel. Praxedis had descended into the courtyard. There she stood under the linden tree, gazing at the men as they came in. Those of St. Gall had all arrived, yet her eyes were still riveted on the door, as if there were still some one missing. He, however, whom her eyes sought, was not among the last entering guests either.

In the castle, they were busying themselves to make room for the new-comers. For the number of men now assembled the space was but scanty. In the round, principal tower, there was an airy hall, in which they heaped up straw, for a temporary night's quarter. "If things go on in this way," grumbled the steward, whose head was nearly turned with all the demands that were being made on him, "we shall soon have the whole priesthood of Europe up here."

Kitchen and cellar gave all they could. In the hall downstairs, monks and warriors were sitting, noisily taking their meal. Dame Hadwig had invited the two abbots, as well as those of noble birth among her guests, into her own reception room. There was a great deal to be discussed, and

## Ekkehard

the questions and answers, quickly given and often crossing each other, made a strange confusion of voices.

As soon as an opportunity offered, Abbot Cralo told them about the fate of his monastery.

"This time," he began, "the danger came upon us almost unawares. Scarcely had one spoken of the Huns, when the ground was already resounding with the tramp of their horses' hoofs. 'Sharp,' was the word. The pupils of the cloister-school I hastily sent over to the fortress of Wasserburg. Aristotle and Cicero will probably get somewhat dusty; the boys will be catching fish in the Bodensee, instead of studying the classics—if they do not get more serious work to do. The old teachers fled with them over the water, in good time. We others had made ourselves a sort of stronghold, as a refuge. Where the Sitter brook runs through the narrow, fir-grown valley, we found an excellent hiding-place, which we thought no heathenish bloodhound would ever sniff out. There we built ourselves a strong house, with towers and walls; and we consecrated it to the holy Trinity, who I trust will protect it.

"We had scarcely finished it, when the messengers from the lake came, crying: 'Fly, the Huns are coming!' Then there came others from the Rhine valley, and 'Fly!' was again the word. The sky was already dyed red from the work of incen-

## Ekkehard

diaries and camp-fires; the air was filled with the shrieks of people flying and the creaking of retreating cart-wheels. So we also set out. Gold and jewels, St. Gallus's and St. Othmar's coffins, in fact all our treasures, were first safely hidden, the books being carried off to the Wasserburg by the boys. So we left the monastery, not thinking much about eating and drinking, some scanty provisions only having been brought to our retreat in the wood beforehand. Thither we now went in great haste. Only on the road the brothers perceived that we had left the blind Thieto behind in his cell; but nobody ventured to return for him, as the ground was, so to say, already burning under our feet. Thus we remained for several days quietly hidden in our fir-wood, often jumping up at night, to seize our arms, fancying the enemy were outside; but it was only the current of the Sitter, or the rustling of the wind in the tree-tops. One evening, however, a loud voice demanded admittance, and in came Burkhard, the cloister pupil, pale and worn out. Out of friendship for Romeias, the cloister-watchman, he had remained behind, without our noticing it. He was the bearer of evil tidings. The terror of what he had seen had turned some of the hairs on his young head quite gray." Abbot Cralo's voice here began to tremble. He stopped a moment to take a draft of wine. "The Lord be merciful to all departed Christian souls," said he

## Ekkehard

with emotion. "His blessings be with them, and may He let them rest in peace."

"Amen," said the others.

"Of whom are you thinking?" asked the Duchess. Praxedis had left her place and gone behind her mistress's chair, where she stood breathlessly watching Abbot Cralo's lips.

"It is only when a man is dead and gone," continued the Abbot, taking up the thread of his tale again, "that the survivors appreciate his value. Romeias, the best of all watchmen, did not leave the monastery with us. 'I will keep to my post to the last,' said he. He then barred and locked all the gates, hid all that was valuable, and went his round on the walls accompanied by Burkhard, the cloister-pupil. The remaining time he kept watch on the tower, his arms by his side. Soon after we had left, a large body of Huns on horseback, carefully prying about, approached the walls. Romeias gave the ordinary bugle sounds, and then quickly running to the other end of the courtyard, blew the horn there again, as if the monastery were still occupied, and well prepared. 'Now the time has come for us to depart also,' said he to the pupil. He had fastened an old withered nosegay to his helmet, Burkhard told us; and thus the two went to the blind Thieto, who, being loth to leave his accustomed corner, was placed on two spears, and thus carried away. Letting themselves out

## Ekkehard

by a secret little gate, they fled up the Schwarza valley.

"Already the Huns had sprung from their horses, and had begun to climb the walls, and when they saw that nothing stirred, they swarmed in like flies on a drop of honey. Romeias meanwhile quietly walked on with his hoary burden. 'Nobody shall say of the cloister-watchman,' said he, 'that he quickened his step to please a pack of heathenish bloodhounds.' Thus he tried to encourage his young friend; but only too soon the Huns were on their track. Wild cries came up the valley, and soon after the first arrows whizzed through the air. So they reached Wiborad's rock; but here, even Romeias was surprised; for, as if nothing uncommon had happened, Wiborad's hollow psalm-singing was heard as usual. In a heavenly vision, her speedy suffering and death had been revealed to her, and even the pious Waldramm could not persuade her to fly. 'My cell is the battle-field on which I have fought against the old enemy of mankind, and, like a true champion of the Lord, I will defend it to the last breath,' said she; and so she remained quite alone in that desolate spot, when all others left it. As the cloister's refuge in the fir-wood was too far to be reached, Romeias picked out a remote little hut, and in it carefully deposited the blind Thieto, letting him in by the roof. Before leaving him, he



## Ekkehard

kissed the old man, and then told the cloister-pupil to fly, and save himself.

“‘You see, something may happen to me,’ he said, ‘and so you must tell those in the refuge to look after the blind one.’ Burkhard in vain besought him to fly likewise, quoting Nisus and Euryalus, who had also fled into the woods before the greater numbers of the Volscian horsemen. ‘I should have to run too fast,’ replied Romeias, ‘and that would make me too warm, and give me pains in the chest. Besides I should like to speak a word or two with the children of the Devil.’

“He then went up to Wiborad’s cell, and, knocking at the shutter, called out: ‘Give me thy hand, old dragon, we will make peace now,’ upon which Wiborad stretched out her withered right hand. Finally, Romeias blocked up the narrow passage of the Schwarza with some huge stones, and then taking his shield from his back, and holding his shafts ready, he seized his big bugle-horn to blow in it once more. With flying hair he thus stood behind his wall, expecting the enemy. At first the sounds were fierce and warlike, but by degrees they became softer and sweeter, until an arrow, flying right into the opening, produced a sharp dissonance. The next moment, a whole shower of arrows covered him and stuck fast in his shield; but he shook them off like rain-drops. Here and there one of the Huns climbed up the rocks to

## Ekkehard

get at him, but Romeias's shafts fetched them down quickly. The attack became fiercer and louder, but, undaunted, Wiborad was still chanting her psalm:

"'Destroy them in Thy anger, O Lord. Destroy them that they exist no more, so that the world may know that God is reigning in Israel, and over the whole earth. Selah.'

"So far Burkhard had witnessed the fighting; then he had turned and fled. On hearing his account in the refuge, we were all very much grieved, and sent out a troop that very night to look after the blind Thieto. Perfect quiet reigned on the hill of the recluses when they reached it. The moon was shining on the bodies of the slain Huns, and among them the brothers found—"

Here the recital was interrupted by loud sobs. Praxedis was with difficulty supporting herself on the back of the Duchess's chair, and was weeping bitterly.

"—There they found the dismembered body of Romeias," continued the Abbot. "His head was hewn off and carried away by the enemy. He lay on his shield, the faded flowers which had adorned his helmet tightly clutched in his hand. May God reward him, for he whose life was lost in doing his duty is surely worthy to enter heaven. Wiborad's shutter was knocked at in vain, and the tiles of her

## Ekkehard

roof were mostly broken. So one of the brothers climbed up, and, on looking down, beheld the recluse lying in her blood before the little altar of her cell. Three wounds were visible on her head, which proved that the Lord had deemed her worthy to die a martyr's death by the hands of the heathen."

Every one was too much moved to speak. Dame Hadwig also was deeply touched.

"I have brought you the veil of the martyr," said Sir Cralo, "consecrated by the blood of her wounds. You might hang it up in the castle chapel. Only Thieto, the blind one, had remained unharmed. Undiscovered by the enemy, he was found soundly sleeping in the little hut by the rock. 'I have been dreaming that an eternal peace had come over the world,' said he to the brothers when they awoke him. But even in our remote little valley we were not to have peace much longer, as the Huns found their way to us also. That was a swarming, piping, and snorting such as had never been heard before in the quiet fir-wood. Our walls were strong, and our courage likewise; but hungry people soon get tired of being besieged. The day before yesterday our provisions were all eaten up; and when the evening came we saw a pillar of smoke rise from our monastery. So we broke through the enemy in the middle of the night, the Lord being with us and our swords helping like-

## Ekkehard

wise. And so we have come to you," with a bow toward the Duchess, "homeless and orphaned, like birds whose nest has been struck by lightning, and bringing nothing with us but the tidings that the Huns, whom may the Lord destroy, are following on our heels."

"The sooner they come the better," defiantly said the Abbot of the Reichenau, raising his goblet.

"Here's to the arms of God's own champions," said the Duchess, ringing her glass against his.

"And revenge for the death of the brave Romeias," added Praxedis in a low voice and with tears in her eyes, while her glass touched against the gaunt Friedinger's.

It was getting late. Wild songs and warlike cries were still resounding in the hall on the first floor. The young monk who had come to the Reichenau from Mutina in Italy had again struck up his sentinel's song.

The opportunity for valiant deeds was no longer very far off.

# Ekkehard

## CHAPTER XIII

### HERIBALD AND HIS GUESTS

ON the little island of Reichenau it was silent and lonely after the departure of the inhabitants of the cloister. The weak-minded Heribald was lord and master of the whole place, and was much pleased with his solitude. For hours he now sat on the shore, throwing smooth pebbles over the waves, so that they danced merrily along. When they sank at once he scolded them loudly.

With the poultry in the yard, which he fed very regularly, he also talked a good deal. "If you are very good, and the brothers do not return," he once said, "Heribald will preach you a sermon." In the monastery itself he also found plenty of amusement, for in a single day of solitude a man can hatch a good many useful ideas. The keeper of the stores had angered him by refusing to give him the necessary shoe-leather; so Heribald went up to his cell, smashed to pieces his large stone water-jug, as well as his three flower-pots, and then opening the straw mattress he took out some of the straw, and put in the broken crockery instead.

## Ekkehard

Having achieved this feat, he lay down on it, and on feeling the hard and sharp-edged contents tolerably unpleasant he smiled contentedly and betook himself to the Abbot's apartments.

Toward the Abbot he also bore a grudge, as he was indebted to him for many a sound whipping; but in his rooms everything was locked up and in excellent order. So nothing was left to him but to cut off one of the legs of the cushioned easy-chair. Having done this, he cunningly placed it back in its old place, as if nothing whatever had happened. "That will break down nicely with him when he comes home and sits comfortably on it. 'Thou shalt castigate the flesh,' says St. Benedict. But Heribald has not cut off the chair's foot. The Huns have done it."

The duty of prayer and psalm-singing he performed regularly, as the rules of the order prescribed. The seven times for prayer each day the solitary man strictly adhered to, as if he could be punished for missing them; and he descended also every night into the cloister chapel, there to hold midnight vigil.

At the hour when his clerical brothers were carousing in the hall of the ducal castle with the monks of St. Gall, Heribald was standing in the choir. The dark, dreary shadows of night enveloped the aisle, in which the everlasting lamp was dimly burning; but fearlessly and with a clear

## Ekkehard

voice Heribald intoned the first verse: "O Lord, deliver me from evil"—and then sang the third psalm, which David had once sung, when he fled before his son Absalom. When he came to the place where the antiphon was to fall in, according to custom, he stopped, waiting for the responses. Everything remained silent and still, however. Heribald passed his hand over his forehead, and said: "Ah, I forgot! They are all gone, and Heribald is alone." Then he wanted to sing the forty-ninth psalm, as the nightly service required, when the everlasting lamp went out, a bat having extinguished it with its wings. Outside, storm and rain were raging. Heavy drops fell on the roof of the church, and beat against the windows. Heribald began to shudder.

"Holy Benedict," exclaimed he, "be pleased to see that it is not Heribald's fault that the antiphon was not sung." He then rose and walked with careful steps through the dark aisle. A shrill wind whistled through a little window of the crypt under the high altar, producing a howling sound; and as Heribald advanced, a draft caught his garment. "Art thou come back, thou hellish tempter?" said he; "must I fight thee once more?"

Undauntedly he stepped back to the altar and seized a wooden crucifix, which the Abbot had not had taken away. "In the name of the Holy Trinity, I defy thee, Satan. Come on, Heribald

## Ekkehard

awaits thee!" With unabated courage he thus stood on the altar steps; but though the wind continued to howl dismally, the Devil did not appear.

"He still remembers the last time," smilingly said the idiot. About a year ago the Evil One had appeared to him in the shape of a big dog, barking furiously at him; but Heribald had attacked him with a pole, and had aimed his blows so well that the pole broke.

Then Heribald screamed out a number of choice invectives in the direction where the wind was moaning; and when even after this nothing came to tempt him, he replaced the crucifix on the altar, bent his knees before it, and then went back to his cell, murmuring the "*Kyrie eleison*." There he slept the sleep of the just until late in the morning. The sun was already high in the heavens when Heribald was complacently walking up and down before the monastery. Since the time when he had enjoyed an occasional holiday at school he had seldom had an opportunity of resting. "Idleness is the soul's worst enemy," St. Benedict had said, and in consequence strictly ordered his disciples to fill up the time which was not claimed by devotional tasks by the work of their hands. Heribald, not knowing any art or handicraft, had been employed in cutting wood and in rendering similar useful but tiring services; but now he paced up and



## Ekkehard

down with crossed arms before the heaped-up logs, looking up smilingly at one of the cloister windows.

"Why don't you come down, Father Rudimann, and make Heribald cut the wood? You, who used to keep such excellent watch over the brothers, and who so often called Heribald a useless servant of the Lord, when he looked at the clouds, instead of handling the ax. Why don't you attend to your duty?"

Not even an echo gave answer to the half-witted creature's query; so he drew out some of the under logs, thus making the whole pile fall noisily down. "Tumble down if you like," continued he in his soliloquy, "Heribald has a holiday, and is not going to put you up again. The Abbot has run away, and the brothers have run away also; so it serves them right if everything tumbles down."

After these laudable achievements Heribald directed his steps to the cloister garden. Another project now occupied his mind. He intended to cut a few delicate lettuces for his dinner, and to dress them a good deal better than they would ever have been done during the time of the father head-cook's superintendence. Temptingly the vision rose before him how he would not spare the oil-jug, and would pitilessly cut to pieces some of the biggest onions, when a cloud of dust rose on the

## Ekkehard

opposite shore and the forms of horses and riders became visible.

"Are you there already?" said the monk, making the sign of the cross and then mumbling a hasty prayer; but a few moments later his face had resumed its customary smile of contentment.

"Strange wanderers and pilgrims are to meet with a Christian reception at the gate of any house of the Lord," murmured he. "I will receive them."

A new idea now crossed his brain, and again passing his hand over his forehead he exclaimed: "Have I not studied the history of the ancients in the cloister school, and learned how the Roman Senators received the invading Gauls? Dressed in their mantles, the ivory sceptre in their hands, the venerable men sat in their chairs, motionless like bronze idols. Ah, well, the Latin teacher shall not have told us in vain that this was a most worthy reception. Heribald can do the same!"

A mild imbecility may be an enviable dower now and then in life. That which appears black to others seems to the half-witted blue or green, and if his path be zigzag, he does not notice the serpents hidden in the grass; and the abyss into which the wise man inevitably falls he stumbles past, without even perceiving the threatening danger.

A curule chair not being just then in the monastery, Heribald pushed a huge oak stem toward

## Ekkehard

the gate which led into the courtyard. "For what end have we studied secular history, if we can not even take counsel by it?" said he, seating himself quietly on his block, in expectation of that which was to come.

Opposite, on the near shore, a troop of horsemen had stopped. With their reins slung round their arms, and their arrows ready fastened on their bows, they had gone on ahead to reconnoitre. When no ambuscade came out from behind the willows bordering the lake, they stopped a while to rest their horses. Then the arrows were put back into their quivers, the crooked sabres taken between the teeth, and, pressing the spurs into the horses' sides, they went into the lake. Quickly the horses crossed the blue waves. Now the foremost men had touched the land, and, jumping from their saddles, shook themselves three times, like a poodle coming out of its bath, and then with piercing, triumphant shouts they approached the monastery.

Like an image of stone, Heribald sat at his post, gazing undauntedly at the strange figures before him. As yet he had never passed a sleepless night musing over the perfection of human beauty, but the faces which now met his view struck him as being so very ugly that he could not suppress a startled, "Have mercy upon us, O Lord!"

Partly bent, the strange guests were sitting in

## Ekkehard

their saddles, their shrunk, meagre little bodies dressed in beasts' skins. From their square-shaped skulls, black, shaggy hair hung down in wild disorder; and their unshapely yellow faces glistened as if they had been anointed with tallow. One of the foremost had enlarged his coarse-lipped mouth considerably by a voluntary cut at the corners, and from their small, deep-set eyes they looked out suspiciously at the world.

"To make a Hun, one need only give a square shape to a lump of clay, put on a smaller lump for a nose, and drive in the chin," Heribald was just thinking when they stood before him. He did not understand their hissing language, and smiled complacently, as if the whole gang did not concern him in the least. For a while they kept staring with unbounded astonishment at this puzzling specimen of humanity—as critics are apt to do at a new poet, of whom they do not as yet know in what pigeon-hole of ready-made judgments they are to put him. At last one of them beheld the bald place on Heribald's pate, and, pointing at it with his bare sabre—upon which the others raised a hoarse laugh—he seized his bow and arrow to aim at the monk. But now Heribald's patience had come to an end, and a feeling of Allemannic pride coming over him as he confronted this rabble, he jumped up, calling out: "By the tonsure of St. Benedict, the crown of my head shall not be

## Ekkehard

mocked at by any heathenish dog!" He had seized the reins of one of the foremost riders, and, snatching away his sabre, was just going to assume an aggressive attitude, when, quicker than lightning, one of the Huns threw a noose over his head and pulled him down. Then they tied his hands to his back, and were already raising their death-bringing arms, when a distant tramping was heard, like the approach of a mighty army. This occurrence for the moment completely drew off their attention from the idiot. They threw him like a sack against his oak-trunk, and quickly galloped back to the shore. The whole body of the Hunnic legion had now arrived on the opposite shore. The vanguard, by a shrill whistle, gave the signal that all was safe. At one of the extremities of the island, overgrown with reeds, they had spied a ford, which could be crossed on horseback with dry feet. This they showed to their friends, who now swarmed over like wild bees—many hundred horsemen. Their united forces had availed nothing against the walls of Augsburg and the Bishop's prayers; so, divided into several troops, they now ravaged the land. Their faces, figures, and manner of sitting on horseback were all alike, for with uncultured races the features are mostly cast in one mold, indicating that the aim of the individual lies in conforming to the mass, instead of contrasting with it.

## Ekkehard

In the orchards and gardens, where the monks used to recite their breviaries, Hunnic arms now glistened for the first time. In serpentine lines, their armed ranks now came up toward the monastery. A wild din of music, a mixture of cymbals and violins preceded them; but the sounds were shrill and sharp, as the ears of the Huns were large, but not sensitive, and only those who, from some reason or other, were unfit for the duties of a warrior, became musicians.

High over their heads floated their standard, showing a green cat in a red field, around which some of the chieftains were gathered, Ellak's and Hornebog's tall figures towering above the rest.

Ellak, with clear features and a straight nose, very unlike that of a Hun, had had a Circassian mother, to whom he was indebted for his pale, intelligent face with penetrating eyes. He represented the ruling intellect of the mass. That the old world must be plowed afresh with fire and sword, and that it was better to be the plowman than to serve as manure was his deep-rooted conviction. Hornebog, lean and lank of figure, wore his long black hair in two solitary curls, one at each side. Above these rose a glittering helmet, adorned with two widely spread out eagles' wings, the emblem of Hunnic horsemanship. To him the saddle served as home, tent, and palace. He shot

## Ekkehard

flying birds, and with his sabre could sever the head of an enemy from the trunk while galloping past. At his side hung the six-corded whip, an ingenious symbol of executive power.

On the backs of the horses belonging to the chieftains, beautifully woven carpets, as well as chasubles were hanging, a clear proof that they had already paid visits to other monasteries. The booty was transported in several wagons, and a considerable and motley crowd of followers closed the train.

In a cart drawn by mules, among copper camp-kettles and other kitchen utensils, an old wrinkled woman was sitting. She was shading her eyes with her right hand, looking toward the sun, in the direction where the mountain peaks of the Hegau rose into the air. She knew them well, for the old hag was the woman of the wood. Banished by Ekkehard, she had wandered away into stranger lands, vengeance being her first thought when she awoke in the morning and her last before she fell asleep in the evening. Thus she came as far as Augsburg. At the foot of the hill on which the wooden temple of the Suabian Goddess Zisa had once stood, the Huns' camp-fires were burning, and with them she remained.

On a prancing black steed, by the side of the old woman, a young maiden was gaily riding along. Her skirts were looped up, and she also

## Ekkehard

seemed to feel herself perfectly at home in the saddle. Under her short little nose there was a lovely pair of red lips; her dark eyes were bright and sparkling, and her long raven hair hung down in wavy tresses, interwoven with red ribbons, which merrily floated in the air, like the streams of a ship. Over her loose bodice bow and arrow were hanging, and thus she managed her horse, a true Hunnic Artemis. This was Erica, the Flower-of-the-heath. She was not of Hunnic origin, having been picked up as an abandoned child by some Hunnic riders on the Pannonian heaths. Thus she had accompanied the Huns and had grown up, hardly knowing how. Those whom she liked she caressed, and those who displeased her she bit in the arm. Botund, the old Hunnic chieftain, had loved her, and was killed for this reason by Irkund, the young one. But when Irkund wanted to enjoy the fruit of this deed, Zobolsus's sharp lance did him the same service which Irkund had rendered Botund, without the latter asking for it. Thus Erica's fate had been varied. New ways, new countries, and new loves! And she had become part and parcel of her troop. She was its good spirit and was held in high veneration.

"As long as the Flower-of-the-heath blooms in our ranks we shall conquer the world," said the Huns. "Forward!"

Meanwhile, poor Heribald was still lying in his



## Ekkehard

fetters at the monastery gate. His meditations were very sad. A big gadfly, which he could not drive away with his bound hands, was buzzing round his head. "Heribald has behaved with dignity," thought he. "Like one of the old Romans, he has sat at the gate to receive the enemy, and now he is lying bound on the stones, and the gadfly may sit on his nose quite unmolested. That is the reward of dignified behavior. Heribald will never again be dignified. Among hedgehogs dignity is a most superfluous thing."

Like a mountain-torrent when the flood-gate has been removed, the Hunnic tide now streamed into the cloister-yard. At this spectacle, the good Heribald began to feel really uncomfortable. "Oh, Camerarius," continued he in his meditation, invoking the keeper of the stores under his Latin title, "and if thou wouldst refuse me the next time even the shirt and habit, besides the shoe-leather, then would I fly nevertheless, a naked man!"

Some of the vanguard then reported to Ellak in what state they had found the solitary monk. He made a sign for them to bring the prisoner up before him, upon which they loosened his cords, set him on his feet, and indicated the direction in which he was to go by heavy blows. Slowly the poor wretch advanced, emitting a complaining grunt.

An unspeakably satirical smile played round the

## Ekkehard

Hunnish chieftain's lips, when the idiot at last stood before him. Negligently dropping his horse's reins on its neck, he turned round. "See what a representative of German art and science looks like," he called out to Erica.

On his numerous piratical expeditions Ellak had acquired a scanty knowledge of the German language. "Where are the inhabitants of this island?" asked he in a commanding voice.

Heribald pointed over to the distant Hegau.

"Are they armed?"

"The servants of God are always armed, for the Lord is their shield and sword."

"Well said," laughed the Hun. "Why hast thou remained behind?"

Heribald became embarrassed. He had too much pride to betray the true reason—viz., his torn shoes—so he replied: "Heribald is curious, and wanted to see what the sons of the Devil were like."

Ellak translated the monk's polite speech to his companions, who struck up a loud guffaw.

"You need not laugh," cried Heribald angrily. "We know very well what you are! Abbot Wazmann has told us."

"I shall have thee killed," said Ellak carelessly.

"That will only serve me right," returned Heribald. "Why did I not fly with the others?"

Ellak, casting a searching look at the queer fel-

## Ekkehard

low, was struck with another idea. He made a sign to the standard-bearer, who approached, swinging in the air his flag with the green cat, which had once appeared to King Attila in his youth. In a dreamy mood, he was sitting in his uncle Rugilas's tent, reflecting whether he had not better become a Christian and serve God and learning, when the cat came in. Among the treasures of Rugilas, it had found the golden imperial globe, which had made part of the booty at Byzantium; this it held in its paws and played with it, rolling it about on the floor. And an inward voice said to Attila: "Thou shalt not become a monk, but thou shalt play with the globe of the universe, as the cat does with that golden bauble." Then he became aware that Kutka, the god of the Huns, had appeared to him, and so he swung his sword in the direction of the four quarters of the world, let his finger-nails grow long, and became what he was destined to become, Attila, King of the Huns, the "Scourge of God!"

"Kneel down, miserable monk," cried Ellak, "and worship him whom thou seest in this flag!"

But Heribald stood immovable.

"I don't know him," said he with a hollow laugh.

"'Tis the God of the Huns!" angrily cried the chieftain. "Down on thy knees, cowlbearer, or"—he pointed to his sword.

## Ekkehard

Heribald laughed once more, and, putting his forefinger to his forehead, said: "If you think that Heribald is so easily imposed upon, you are vastly mistaken. It has been written, when God created heaven and earth, and darkness was upon the face of the deep, He said: 'Let there be light.' Now if God were a cat he would not have said: 'Let there be light.' Heribald will not kneel down!"

A Hunnic rider, who had stealthily approached the monk, now pulled his garment, and whispered in an excellent Suabian dialect in his ear: "Countryman, I would kneel down, if I were in your place. They are dangerous people." The warrior's real name was Snewelin, and his birthplace was Ellwangen in Riesgau, but in the course of time he had dropped his Suabian nationality and had become a Hun, which transformation had rather improved his material fortunes. When he spoke, his voice had something windy about it, which was caused by his having lost four front teeth, besides several back teeth; and this had been the principal reason why he had become a Hun. In his younger days, namely, when he was still earning a peaceful livelihood in the capacity of cart-driver of the Salvator convent, he had been sent northward, with a cart-load of choice Neckar wine, to the great market at Magdeburg a well-armed escort accompanying him. To that town, the priests of the heathenish Pomeranians and

## Ekkehard

Wends always resorted to buy their libation wine, and Snewelin made an excellent bargain when he sold his wine to the white-bearded high priest of the three-headed god Triglaff for the great temple at Stettin. But afterward he remained sitting over the wine with the white-bearded heathen, who, being a great friend of the Suabian nectar, soon became enthusiastic, singing the praises of his native land, and saying that the world was infinitely more advanced in their parts, between the Oder and the Spree. He tried, moreover, to convert Snewelin to the worship of Triglaff, the three-headed one, and to that of the black and white sun-god Radegast, as well as to Radomysl, the goddess of lovely thoughts; but this was rather too much for the man of Ellwangen. "You infamous heathenish swindler," exclaimed he, first upsetting the wine-table, and then, flying at him—as the young knight Siegfried did at the wild, long-bearded dwarf Alberich—he wrestled with him, and at one strong tug pulled out half of his gray beard. But his antagonist, calling on Triglaff to help him, dealt him a blow on the mouth with his iron-plated staff, which forever destroyed the beauty of his teeth; and before the toothless Suabian cart-driver had recovered from the blow, his white-bearded antagonist had vanished, so that he could not take revenge on him. But when Snewelin walked out of the gates of Magdeburg, he

## Ekkehard

shook his fists northward, and said: 'We two shall meet again, some day!'

In his native town he was much laughed at on account of his lost teeth, and so, to escape the continual ridicule, he went among the Huns, hoping that perhaps some day, when these should direct their steps northward, he would be able to settle a heavy account with the three-headed Triglaß and all his worshippers.

Heribald, however, did not heed the strange horseman's warning. The woman of the wood had meanwhile got down from her cart, and approached Ellak. With a sinister grin she looked at the monk. "I have read in the stars that by the hands of such bald-headed men evil will befall us," cried she. "To prevent the coming danger, you ought to hang up this miserable creature before the cloister-gate, with his face turned toward yonder mountains!"

"Hang him up," echoed many voices in the crowd, the pantomime of the old woman having been understood. Ellak once more turned his head toward Erica. "This monster has also got principles," said he tauntingly. "It would save his life, and yet he refuses to bend his knees. Shall we have him hanged, Flower-of-the-heath?"

Heribald's life was hanging on a very slender thread. Round about, he saw nothing but stern pitiless faces; his courage began to fail him, and

## Ekkehard

the tears came into his eyes; but in the hour of danger, even the most foolish are often guided by a happy instinct. Like a star, the red-cheeked face of Erica shone before him, and with frightened steps he quickly approached her. To kneel before her was not such a difficult task to him, her sweet looks inspiring him with confidence. With outstretched arms he implored her assistance.

"There!" cried the Flower-of-the-heath, "the man of the island is by no means so foolish as he looks. He prefers kneeling to Erica, instead of the green and red flag." She smiled graciously on the pitiful suppliant, and, jumping from the saddle, she patted him as if he were some half-wild animal. "Don't be afraid," said she; "thou shalt live, poor old black-coat!" and Heribald could read in her eyes that she meant what she said. He pointed to the woman of the wood, who had frightened him most. Erica shook her head. "She shall not harm thee." Then Heribald ran briskly to the wall, near which lilacs and spring roses were already blooming, and, hastily tearing off some of their branches, he presented them to the Hunnic maiden.

A loud shout of delight rang through the cloister-yard. "Hail to the Flower-of-the-heath," cried they all, clashing their arms together.

"Why don't you shout likewise?" whispered the man from Ellwangen into Heribald's ear. So he

## Ekkehard

also raised his voice to a hoarse "Hurrah!" with tears glistening in his eyes.

The Huns had unsaddled their horses, and very much resembled a pack of hounds which, in the evening at the end of the sport, are waiting for the entrails of the deer which has been killed. Here, one is pulling at the cord that restrains him; there, another is barking fiercely with impatience. With similar feelings the Huns stood before the monastery. At last Ellak gave the signal that the pillage might begin. In wild disorder they then ran forward up the staircase, and along the passage into the church. Confused cries, of expected booty and disappointed hopes, resounded everywhere. Then they examined the cells of the brotherhood, but here also nothing was found except the scanty furniture.

"Show us the treasury," said they to Heribald, who complied with this wish willingly enough, as he well knew that all that was precious had been taken away. Only a few plated candlesticks, and the big emerald of colored glass, were still there.

"Miserable convent! The set of beggars!" called out one, giving a kick with his iron-clad foot to the false jewel, so that it became cracked. Heribald was rewarded by sundry heavy blows, so he stole sorrowfully away, as soon as an opportunity offered.

In the cross-passage he met Snewelin, who ac-



## Ekkehard

costed him with: "Countryman, I am an old wine-merchant; tell me where your cellar may be?" Heribald led him down and chuckled with inward glee when he saw that the chief entrance had been walled up. With a knowing look he winked at the fresh lime, as if to say that he well knew its secret. The man of Ellwangen without much ado now cut off the seals on one of the tuns, tapped it, and filled his helmet. This he raised to his lips, and took a long, long draft. "Oh Hahnenkamm and Heidenheim!" exclaimed he, shivering as with the ague at his own mention of those two notoriously villainous brands of wine, "for this beverage I verily need not have become a Hun!" He then ordered his companions to carry up the vats, but Heribald, stepping forward, pulled his gown, and anxiously said: "Allow me, my good man, but what am I to drink when you are gone away?"

Snewelin laughingly reported the monk's scruples to the others. "The fool must keep something," they said, putting back the smallest tun unopened. This kindness touched Heribald so much, that he fervently shook hands with them.

Upstairs in the courtyard a wild shouting was now heard. Some, who had searched the church, had also lifted a gravestone, from under which a bleached skull grinned at them, out of its dark cowl. This spectacle frightened even the Huns. Two of the gang went up to the belfry, the steeple

## Ekkehard

of which was adorned with a gilt weathercock, according to custom. Whether they took it to be the protecting god of the monastery, or imagined it to be real gold, they climbed up the roof, and audaciously sitting there tried to bring the cock down with their lances. But now a sudden giddiness came over them. One let his raised arm sink—a stagger—a cry—and he fell down, quickly followed by the other. With broken necks they lay in the cloister-yard.

“A bad omen,” said Ellak to himself. The Huns uttered a dismal howl, but a few moments later the accident was entirely forgotten. The sword had ravished so many of their companions from their side, so what mattered two more or less? The bodies were carried into the cloister-garden. With the logs which Heribald had upset in the early morning, a funeral-pile was erected; the books which had been left in the libraries were thrown down from the windows, and were made use of in filling up the gaps between the logs—excellent material for fuel!

Ellak and Hornebog were walking together through the ranks. Squeezed in between the logs, a neatly written manuscript with shining golden initials peeped out. Hornebog, drawing his sword, pierced the parchment with it, and presented it to his companion, stuck on the point of the blade.

## Ekkehard

"What do these hooks and chickens' feet mean, Sir Brother?" asked he.

Ellak took the manuscript, and glanced over some of its pages. He also knew Latin.

"Western wisdom," replied he. "A man named Boethius wrote it, and it contains many fine things about the comforts of philosophy."

"Phi—losophy," slowly repeated Hornebog; "what does that mean, Sir Brother?"

"It does not mean a fair woman, nor yet fire-water either," was Ellak's reply. "It will be difficult to describe it in the Hunnic language . . . but if a man does not know wherefore he is in the world, and stands on his head to find out the reason, that is near about what they call philosophy in these western lands. He who comforted himself with it, in his tower at Pavia, was killed for it after all."

"And that served him right!" exclaimed Hornebog. "He who holds a sword in his hand, and feels a horse between his thighs, knows why he is in the world; and if we did not know the reason better than those who smear such hooks on asses' skins, then *they* would be on our heels at the Danube, and our horses would not drink their fill out of the Suabian sea."

"Don't you think that it is very lucky that such trash is made?" continued Ellak, throwing back the manuscript on to the funeral-pile.

## Ekkehard

"Why so?" asked Hornebog.

"Because the hand which guides the pen is never fit to handle the sword so as to make a good gash in the flesh; and when once the nonsense which is concocted by one single head is written down, then at least a hundred others will muddle their brains with it. A hundred blockheads more make a hundred soldiers less, which is clearly enough to our advantage, whenever we choose to make an invasion. 'As long as they write books and hold synods in the West, my children may safely carry their tents forward!' that's what the great Attila himself said."

"Praised be the great Attila!" said Hornebog, reverently, when a voice called out, "Let the dead rest!" and, with dancing steps, Erica came toward the two chieftains. She had mustered the booty of the cloister, and an altar-cloth of red silk, finding grace in her eyes, she put it on like a mantle, the corners lightly thrown back over her shoulders.

"How do I look?" said she, turning her little head about complacently.

"The Flower-of-the-heath does not require any tinsel belonging to Suabian idolators to please us," sternly replied Ellak. Upon this, she jumped up at him, to pat and stroke his lank black hair, and then called out: "Come along, the meal is ready."

Then they went all three to the courtyard. All the hay which could be found the Huns had

## Ekkehard

strewn about, lying down on it and waiting for the repast. With crossed arms, Heribald stood in the background, looking down at them. "The heathenish dogs can not even sit down like Christians, when they are about to eat their daily bread," he thought, taking good care, however, not to utter his thoughts aloud. The experience of former blows had taught him silence.

"Lie down blackcoat; thou mayest eat also," cried Erica, making a sign to him to follow the example of the others. He looked at the man of Ellwangen, who was lying there with crossed legs, as if he had never known what it was to sit otherwise. So Heribald tried to follow his example; but he very soon got up again, as this position seemed too undignified to him. So he fetched a chair out of the monastery, and sat down upon it.

A whole ox had been roasted on a spit, and whatever else they had found in the cloister-kitchen served to complete the repast; and they fell to, ravenously. They cut off the meat with their short sabres, their fingers serving as knife and fork. In the middle of the courtyard the big wine-tun stood upright; every one taking as much as he liked. Here and there, a finely wrought chalice was used as a drinking-cup. Heribald also took as much wine as he wished for, but when with inward contentment he was just beginning to sip at it, a half-gnawed bone flew at his head.

## Ekkehard

With a sorrowful look of surprise he gazed up, and beheld that many another met with the same fate. To throw bones at each other was a Hunnic custom, which served as dessert.

When the wine was beginning to tell on them, they began a rough and unmelodious singing. Two of the younger horsemen sang an old song in honor of King Attila, in which it was said that he had not only been a conqueror with the sword, but also a conqueror of hearts. Then followed a taunting verse, on a Roman Emperor's sister who, charmed with him by hearsay, fell in love with him at a distance, and offered her heart and hand to him, which, however, he refused.

The chorus which followed it strongly resembled the screeching of owls and the croaking of frogs. When this was finished, some of the men approached Heribald, and made him understand that he also was expected to give them a song. He began by refusing, but this availed him nothing. So he sang in an almost sobbing voice the antiphon in honor of the holy cross, beginning with the "*Sanctifica nos.*"

With mute astonishment the drunken men listened to the long-drawn notes of the ancient church music, which sounded like the voice of the preacher in the wilderness. With rising anger, the woman of the wood, sitting beside the copper kettle, heard it. Grasping her knife, she stealthily

## Ekkehard

approached Heribald from behind, and, seizing his hair, wanted to cut off his curls—the greatest insult that could be offered to a consecrated head. But Heribald vigorously pushed her back, and chanted on, nothing daunted, which mightily pleased the assembly, so that they gave a shout of delight. Cymbals and violins also resounded again, and now Erica, who had become tired of the monotonous chant, approached Heribald. With a look that combined both archness and pity, she seized him by the arm, and drawing him into the midst of the wild dance which was now beginning, she called out: “Singing must always be followed by dancing!” Heribald did not know what to do, while the Flower-of-the-heath was all eagerness to begin. “It matters little whether Heribald dances or not, it will be only another small link in the chain of abominations,” he finally thought; so he bravely stamped the ground with his sandal-clad feet, his habit flying about him. Tighter and tighter he pressed the Hunnic maiden’s waist, and who knows what might still have happened if she had not, with heightened color and panting bosom, finally stopped of her own accord. Giving her partner a little playful slap in the face, she ran off to the chieftains, who with serious faces were looking on at the frolics.

The shouts were dying out now, the fumes of

## Ekkehard

the wine being danced off. So Ellak gave the order to burn the dead. In a moment's time, the whole troop were seated on horseback, and riding in closed ranks to the funeral-pile. The horses of the two deceased were then stabbed by the eldest of the Huns, and laid beside their late masters' bodies. Calling out some monstrous conjurations, he lifted the firebrand and lighted the pile. Boethius's "Comfort of Philosophy," pine-logs, manuscripts, and corpses vied with each other which could burn the brightest, and a mighty pillar of flames and smoke rose up to the sky.

With wrestling, warlike exercises and races, the memory of the dead was celebrated. The sun had sunk far down in the west, and so the whole body of Huns entered the monastery, there to pass the night.

It was on the Thursday before Easter when all this happened on the island of Reichenau. The tidings of this invasion soon reached the fishermen's huts around Radolfzell. When Moengal, the parish priest, held the early morning service, he still counted six of his flock, but in the afternoon there were only three, including himself.

Gloomily he sat in the little room in which he had once hospitably entertained Ekkehard, when the pillar of smoke from the Hunnic funeral-pile rose into the air. It was dense and black enough for him to suppose the whole monastery to be in



## Ekkehard

flames, and the scent of burning came over the lake.

"Hihahoi!" cried Moengal, "*jam proximus ardet Ucalegon*; it is already burning at neighbor Ucalegon's! Then it is time for me to get ready too. Out with ye now, my old Cambutta!"

Cambutta, however, was no serving-maid, but a huge bludgeon, a real Irish shillalah, and Moengal's favorite weapon. The chalice and ciborium he packed up and put into his leathern game-bag. This was all he possessed of gold or silver. Then he called his hounds, his hawk, and two falcons together, and giving them all the meat and fish his pantry boasted, he said: "Children, eat as much as ever you can, so that nothing may be left for those cursed plagues when they come!"

He knocked to pieces the vat in the cellar, so that the sparkling wine streamed forth. "Not a drop of wine shall the devils drink in Moengal's house," said he. Only the jug which contained the vinegar was left in its place. On the fresh, delicious butter in the wooden tun he emptied a basketful of ashes. His fishing-tackle and other sporting utensils he buried in the ground; then he smashed the windows, and strewed the fragments about in the room. Some he even put into the chinks of the floor, with the points turned upward—all in honor of the Huns! Hawk and falcons then received their liberty. "Farewell!" cried he, "and

## Ekkehard

keep near, for soon you will get dead heathens to pick!"

So his house was put in order. Hanging the game-bag, as well as a Hibernian canteen, over his shoulders, with two spears in his hands, and Cambutta fastened on his back—thus old Moengal walked out of his parsonage, which had been his home for so many years, a valiant champion of the Lord!

He had already gone on a few paces through the smoke-darkened atmosphere, when he suddenly stopped short, saying: "Wait a bit, I have forgotten something."

So he quickly retraced his steps, murmuring: "The yellow-faced rascals shall at least find some written words of welcome."

Arrived at his door, he drew a piece of red chalk from his pocket, and therewith wrote in large Irish characters a few words on the gray sandstone slab over the portal. Later rains have washed them away, and nobody has ever read them, but no doubt it was a significant greeting which old Moengal left behind him in Irish runes. Quickening his pace he then took the direction of the Hohentwiel.

# Ekkehard

## CHAPTER XIV

### THE BATTLE WITH THE HUNS

GOOD FRIDAY had come; but the anniversary of our Saviour's death was not kept on the Hohen-twiël this time in the silent way which the prescriptions of the church require. By the arrival of old Moengal all doubts about the enemy's approach were dispersed. Late in the night a council of war was held, at which it was determined to go out and meet the Huns in open battle.

The sun rose drearily on that day, soon being hidden again in mist. A fierce gale was blowing over the land, chasing the clouds along, so that they sank down on the distant Bodensee, as if water and air were to mingle together. Now and then a solitary sunbeam struggled through. It was the as yet undecided battle which spring was waging against the powers of winter. The men had already risen, and were preparing for a serious day's work.

In his closet, up in the watch-tower, Ekkehard was silently pacing up and down, his hands folded in prayer. A highly honorable commission had devolved on him. He was to preach a sermon to

## Ekkehard

the united forces before they went out to battle, and so he was now praying for strength and inspiration, that his words might be like sparks, kindling the warlike flame in each breast. Suddenly the door opened, and in came the Duchess, unaccompanied by Praxedis. Over her morning-dress she had thrown an ample cloak, to protect herself against the cool air; perhaps also that she might not be recognized by the strange guests, while going over to the watch-tower. A faint blush mantled on her cheeks, as she thus stood alone, opposite her youthful teacher.

"You are also going out to battle, to-day?" asked she.

"Yes, I go with the others," replied Ekkehard.

"I should despise you, if you had given me any other reply," said she; "and you have justly presumed that for such an expedition it would not be necessary to ask my leave. But have you not thought of saying good-by?" added she, in low, reproachful accents.

Ekkehard was embarrassed. "There are many nobler and better men leaving your castle to-day. The departing abbots and knights will claim all your attention; abbots and knights will surround you. How, then, could I think of taking a special leave of you, even if—" His voice broke off.

The Duchess looked into his eyes. Neither said a word.

## Ekkehard

"I have brought you something which is to serve you in battle," said she after a while, drawing out a handsome sword with a rich shoulder-belt from under her mantle. A white agate adorned the hilt. "It is the sword of Sir Burkhard, my late husband. Of all the arms he possessed, he valued this the most. 'With that blade one could split rocks without breaking it,' he said many a time. You will wear it to-day with honor."

She held out the sword to him; Ekkehard received it in silence. His coat of mail he had already put on under his habit. He buckled on the shoulder-belt, and then seized the hilt with his right hand, as if the enemy were already facing him.

"I have something else for you," continued Dame Hadwig. And she now drew forth a golden locket hanging on a silk ribbon round her neck. It contained nothing but an insignificant-looking splinter of wood.

"If my prayers should not suffice, then this relic will protect you. It is a splinter of the holy cross, which the Empress Helena discovered. Wherever this relic is, wrote the Greek patriarch who attested its genuineness, there will be peace, happiness, and serenity. May it bring a blessing to you in the coming battle."

She leaned toward him, to hang the jewel round his neck. Quickly he bent his knees to receive it;

## Ekkehard

but it had long been hanging round his neck, and still he knelt before her. She passed her hand lightly over his curly hair, and there was a peculiarly soft and half sad expression on the usually haughty countenance.

Ekkehard had bent his knee at the name of the holy cross, but now he felt as if he must kneel down a second time before her, who was thus graciously thinking of him. A budding affection requires some time to understand itself clearly, and in matters of love he had not learned to reckon and count, as in the verses of Virgil, or he might have guessed that she who had taken him away from his quiet cloister-cell, that she who on that evening on the Hohenkrähen had looked on him so tenderly, and now on the morning of battle was standing before him as Dame Hadwig was at that moment, might well have expected some words out of the depth of his heart—perhaps even more than words only.

His thoughts quickly followed each other, and all his pulses were throbbing. When on former occasions anything like love had stirred his heart, then the reverence for his mistress had driven it back, nipping it in the bud, as the cold winds of March wither and blight the early spring flowers. At this moment, however, he was not thinking of that reverence, but rather how he had once carried the Duchess boldly over the cloister-yard.

## Ekkehard

Neither did he think of his monastic vow, but he felt as if he must rush into her arms, and press her to his heart with a cry of delight. Sir Burkhard's sword seemed to burn at his side. "Throw aside all reserve, for only the bold will conquer the world." Were not these words to be read in Dame Hadwig's eyes?

He stood up; strong, great, and free—she had never seen him look so before—but it lasted only a second. As yet not one sound betraying his inward struggle had escaped his lips, when his eye fell on the dark, ebony cross, which Vincentius had once hung up on the wall. "It is the day of the Lord, and thou shalt open thy lips to-day before his people;" and the remembrance of his duty drove away all other thoughts. . . .

Shyly, as on former occasions, he took Dame Hadwig's hand. "How shall I thank my mistress?" said he, in broken accents.

She cast a searching look at him. The soft expression had vanished, and the old sternness had returned to her brow, as if she meant to say: "If you don't know how, I am not going to tell you." But she said nothing. Still Ekkehard held her hand in his. She drew it back.

"Be pious and brave," said she, turning to leave the chamber. It sounded like mockery. . . .

Scarcely longer than a person needs to say the Lord's Prayer had the Duchess been with him,

## Ekkehard

but far more had happened in that time than he knew of.

He resumed his walk up and down his small abode. "Thou shalt deny thyself and follow the Lord," thus St. Benedict's rules began, and Ekkehard felt almost proud of the victory he had won. But Dame Hadwig had gone away with wounded pride; and if a haughty mind believes itself to be disdained, evil days must follow.

It was the seventh hour of the morning, and in the courtyard on the Hohentwiel they were all attending divine service before setting out. The altar had been erected under the old linden tree, and on it were placed the sacred relics, to comfort the hearts of all believers. The courtyard was entirely filled with armed men, standing in close, orderly groups, just as Simon Bardo had arranged them. Like the roll of distant thunder arose the holy chants of the monks. The Abbot of Reichenau, wearing the black pall with the white cross, was to celebrate high mass.

Ekkehard mounted the altar-steps after him. With deep emotion his eye glided over the crowded assembly; once more the remembrance of how he had but a short while ago stood face to face with the Duchess in the solitary chamber passed through his mind; and then he read in the Gospel of the suffering and death of our Saviour. As he read on, his voice became more and more clear and



## Ekkehard

distinct, and when he had finished he first kissed the book and then handed it to the deacon, for him to put it back on its silk cushion. For a moment he looked up heavenward, and then began his sermon.

The assembly listened to his words with breathless attention.

"Almost a thousand years have come and gone," cried he, "since the Son of God bent His head on the cross, saying, 'It is finished!' but we have not yet prepared our souls to receive the redemption, for we have lived in sin, and the offenses which we have committed through the hardness of our hearts cry out against us to Heaven. Therefore a time of affliction has come upon us; glittering swords are raised against us; heathenish monsters have invaded Christian soil.

"But instead of angrily inquiring, 'How long will the Lord forbear before He interferes and delivers our beloved homes from the hands of such heathenish idolaters?' let everybody strike his own bosom and say, 'On account of our sins this chastisement has been sent upon us.' And if you would be delivered from them, think of our Saviour's painful death, and, as He took up His cross, bearing it Himself to the place of skulls, so must you seize the sword, and seek your own Golgotha!" . . .

Pointing over to the shores of the lake, he poured

## Ekkehard

out words of comfort and prophecy, strong and powerful as the lion's call in the desert.

"The times are coming of which it has been written: 'And when the thousand years are expired, Satan shall be loosed out of his prison, and shall go out to deceive the nations, which are in the four quarters of the earth, Gog and Magog, to gather them together to battle: the number of whom is as the sand of the sea. And they went up, on the breadth of the earth, and compassed the camp of the saints about, and the beloved city: and fire came down from God, out of heaven, and devoured them. And the devil that deceived them was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet are, and shall be tormented day and night, forever and ever.'

"And all this, which the seer beheld and revealed at Patmos, is for us a promise of the victory that is to come, if we go out with purified hearts to meet the enemy. Let them come on their swift horses; what does it matter? The Lord has marked them as the children of the Devil, therefore their face is but a mockery of the human countenance. They can destroy the harvest on our fields, and desecrate our altars, but they can not resist the powerful arms of those whom God himself has inspired. Therefore keep in mind that we Suabians must always be in the foremost ranks

## Ekkehard

when the Fatherland has to be defended; and if at other times it would be a dire sin in the eyes of the Lord to buckle on the sword on His holy day, to-day He will bless our weapons, and send down His saints to assist us, and Himself fight in our ranks—He the Lord of hosts, who sends down His destroying lightnings, and opens the bowels of earth itself, when the right time has come.”

With choice examples of glorious warlike deeds Ekkehard then tried to inspire his auditors; and many a hand fiercely grasped the spear, and many a foot was lifted impatiently from the ground, when he spoke of Joshua, who with the Lord's help had conquered thirty-one kings, on the other side of the Jordan; and of Gideon, who with loud sounding trumpets entered the camp of the Midianites, and drove them before him unto Bethesda and Tebbath; and of the sally of the men of Bethulia, who after Judith's glorious deed smote the Assyrians with the edge of the sword.

But at the end he quoted the words which Judas Maccabæus had spoken to his people, when they erected their camp at Emaus, before going out to fight the army of King Antiochus: “Arm yourselves and be valiant men, and see that ye be in readiness against the morning, that ye may fight with these nations that are assembled together against us to destroy us and our sanctuary.”

## Ekkehard

For a moment after he had ended there was perfect silence, but soon arose a great stir among the men, and a rattling and clashing of arms was heard. Swords and shields were knocked together, spears lifted and badges waved in the air; all, as signs of hearty approval, according to old custom. "Amen," was repeated from all sides, while the whole assembly fell on their knees, as the high mass was reaching its close. The wooden rattles, instead of the usual church-bells, thrilled them with awe. Every one who had not yet taken the holy sacrament went up to the altar to receive it. But now from the watch-tower was suddenly heard the cry: "To arms! to arms! the enemy is coming! A dark mass of riders and horses is moving toward us from the lake!" And now there was no longer any possibility of keeping back the eager men, who were all pressing toward the gate, Abbot Wazmann having scarcely time to pronounce a blessing over them.

So, in our days does the fisherman of the north run out of the church on a Sunday, at the time when the shoals of herrings are approaching. "The fish are coming," cries the watchman on the shore, and the moment afterward every man is hurrying away toward the boats. Forsaken and alone stands the clergyman; so his devotions are at an end and he seizes the nets likewise to wage war upon the scaly tribe.

## Ekkehard

Thirsting for the coming battle, the troops left the courtyard, each heart swelling with the soul-stirring conviction that a great and important moment was at hand. The monks of St. Gall mustered sixty-four, those of the Reichenau ninety, and of the lay vassalage there were above five hundred. Close by the standard of the cross of the brotherhood of St. Gall walked Ekkehard. It was a crucifix, veiled in black crape, with long black streamers, since the monastery's banner had been left behind.

On the balcony stood the Duchess, waving her white handkerchief. Ekkehard, turning round, looked up at her, but her eyes evaded his, as if the parting salutation were not meant for him.

St. Mark's coffin had been carried down to the lower castle-gate by some of the serving brothers. Every one touched it with the point of his lance and of his sword, and then silently passed on.

In the wide plain stretching out toward the lake Simon Bardo drew up his troops, and one could see how pleased the old field-marshal was that his scar-covered breast again wore the accustomed mail, instead of the monk's habit. His head was covered by a strangely shaped, pointed steel morion; his broad, jewel-set girdle, as well as the gilt handle of his sword, indicated the general's rank.

"*You* read the classics on account of the *gram-*

## Ekkehard

*mar,"* said he to the Abbots, "but *I* have learned my *handicraft* from them. With the military advice of Frontinus and Vegetius, one may still achieve something even nowadays. First we will try the battle array of the Roman legions; for in that position one can best await the enemy, and see what he means to do. Afterward, we are still at liberty to change our tactics, for affairs will not be settled between us in half an hour."

The light corps of the archers and sling-bearers were ordered to occupy the border of the wood, where they would be sheltered by the fir trees against any attack on horseback. "Aim low," said he, "for even if you should merely hit the horse instead of the rider, it is always something." At the sound of the bugle, the troop advanced to execute his commands. As yet, nothing was to be seen of the enemy.

The lay vassals he arrayed in two close ranks. With leveled lances they slowly advanced, a space of a few steps remaining between the two files. The knight of Randegg and the gaunt Friedinger commanded them.

The monks Simon Bardo collected into one compact body, placing them in the rear.

"Why this?" asked Abbot Wazmann, inwardly hurt at losing the honor of heading the attack. But Bardo, experienced in war, smilingly replied: "Those are my Triarians; not because they are

## Ekkehard

veteran soldiers, but because they are fighting for their own warm nests. To be driven out of house and home and bed makes swords cut deepest, and spears thrust fiercest. Don't be afraid, the tug of war will yet draw the disciples of St. Benedict into the strife."

The Huns had left the monastery of Reichenau at early dawn. The provisions were all consumed, the wine drunk, and the cloister pillaged; so their day's work was done. Heribald's forehead lost many a wrinkle when the last of the Hunnic riders had passed out of the cloister-gate. He threw after them a golden coin which the man from Ellwangen had secretly thrust into his hand. "Countryman, if thou shouldst hear that a mishap has befallen me," said Snewelin, "I trust that thou wilt let a dozen masses be read for my poor soul. I have always befriended you and your fellow-monks, and how I have fallen among the heathens I scarcely can understand myself. The soil of Ellwangen is unfortunately too rough and stony for producing saints."

Heribald, however, would have nothing to do with him. In the garden he shoveled up the bones and ashes of the burnt Huns and their horses, throwing them into the lake, while the Huns were still visible on the other side. "No heathen dust shall remain on the island," said he. Then he went to the cloister-yard, and thought-

## Ekkehard

fully stared at the place where he had been forced to dance on the day before.

Meanwhile, the Huns were riding through the dark fir wood toward the Hohentwiel. But as they were thus cantering along, heedless of all danger, here and there a horse began to stagger, and arrows and other sharp missiles flew into their ranks, sent by invisible hands. The vanguard began to slacken rein and to halt; but Ellak, giving the spurs to his horse, cried out: "Why do you shrink at the stinging of gnats? Forward, the plain is a better field of battle!"

A dozen of his men were ordered to stay behind, in order to protect the baggage and camp followers against their hidden enemies. The ground echoed with the tramp of the advancing horde, and as soon as they reached the plain they spread their ranks, and uttering a wild howl advanced to meet the approaching column of the arrier-ban.

Far ahead rode Ellak, accompanied by the Hunnic standard-bearer, who was waving the green and red flag over his head. Uttering a piercing cry, the chieftain now lifted himself high in the saddle, and then shot off the first arrow, thus opening the battle according to old custom; and now the bloody fight began in good earnest. Little availed it the Suabian warriors that they stood firm and immovable like a wall of lances; for although the horses recoiled before them, a shower of arrows was



## Ekkehard

sent at them from the distance. Half raised in the stirrups, with the reins hanging over their horses' necks, the Huns took aim, and generally their arrows hit the mark.

Others came on from the sides, and woe to the wounded if his companions did not take him into their centre.

Then the light troops intended to come out of the fir wood, and attack the Huns from behind. The sound of the bugle again collected them together; they advanced; but, quick as thought, their enemies' horses were turned round, and a shower of arrows greeted them. They staggered, and only a few advanced, but these also were thrown back, so that finally Audifax was left alone, bravely marching along. Many an arrow whizzed round his head, but without minding them, or once looking back, he blew his bagpipe, as was his duty. Thus he came right into the midst of the Hunnic riders. But now his piping stopped suddenly, for in passing one of the Huns had thrown a noose over his head. Trying hard to resist, Audifax looked around, but not a single man of his troop was to be seen. "Oh Hadumoth!" cried he mournfully. The rider took pity on the brave fair-haired boy; so instead of splitting his head, he lifted him up into the saddle, and galloped away to the place where the Hunnic train had stopped, under the shelter of a hill.

## Ekkehard

With erect figure the woman of the wood stood on her cart, intently gazing at the raging battle. She had dressed the wounds of the first Huns who fell, pronouncing some powerful charms over them to stop the bleeding.

"Here I bring you some one to clean the camp-kettles!" cried the Hunnic rider, throwing the boy over, so that he fell right into the cart, and at the feet of the old woman.

"Welcome, thou venomous little toad," cried she fiercely. "Thou shalt get thy reward sure enough, for having shown the way up to my house, to that cowl-bearer!" She had recognized him at once, and, dragging him toward her, tied him fast to the cart.

Audifax remained silent, but scalding tears fell from his eyes. He did not cry, though, on account of being taken prisoner, but he cried from another heavy disappointment. "Oh Hadumoth!" sighed he again. Yesterday at midnight he had sat together with the little goose-girl, hidden in a corner of the fireplace. "Thou shalt become invulnerable," Hadumoth had said, "for I will give thee a charm against all weapons!" She had boiled a brown snake, and anointed his forehead, shoulders, and breast with its fat. "To-morrow evening I shall wait for thee in this same corner, for thou wilt surely come back to me, safe and sound. No metal can do anything against the fat

## Ekkehard

of a snake." Audifax had squeezed her hands, and had gone out so joyously into battle; and now—

The fighting was still going on in the plain, and the Suabian combatants, not being used to battle, began to get tired already. With an anxious expression Simon Bardo was watching the state of affairs; and with an angry shake of the head, he grumbled to himself: "The best strategy is lost on these Centaurs, who come and go, and shoot at a distance, as if my threefold flanks stood there only to amuse them. It would really be well if one were to add a chapter to Emperor Leo's book on tactics, treating of the attack of the Huns."

He now approached the monks, and, dividing them up into two bodies, ordered the men of St. Gall to advance on the right, and those of Reichenau on the left; they were then to wheel about, so that the enemy, having the wood at his back, would be shut in by a semicircle. "If we do not surround them, they will not let us get at them," cried he, flourishing his broad sword in the air. "So now to the attack!"

A wild fire was gleaming in all eyes; and on the point of starting, they all dropped down on their knees; each took up a clod of earth, and threw it over his head that he might be consecrated and blessed by his native earth; and then

## Ekkehard

they rushed on to battle. Those of St. Gall struck up the pious war-song of "*Media vita.*" Notker, the stutterer, had once passed through the ravines of the Martistobel, in his native land, when a bridge was just being built over a yawning precipice. The workmen were hanging suspended over the giddy height, and at that sight the idea rose in his soul, how in our life we are always walking on the edge of the abyss of death, and so he composed those verses. Now they served as a sort of magic song, which was to protect them and bring death to their enemies. Solemn sounded its strains from the lips of the men going into battle.

"Though yet we live, by Death we are surrounded,  
And ever near his messengers are staying.  
Whom could we choose, to help us in great danger.  
But Thee, oh Lord, the judge of all the living!  
Almighty God!"

And from the other wing the monks of the Reichenau were singing:

"Long our fathers for Thy coming panted,  
And Thou redeemest them from sin and sorrow,  
Up to Thy throne arose their wailing voices,  
And Thou didst not reject their tears and prayers,  
Thou Lord of hosts!"

## Ekkehard

And from both sides was then heard at once:

“Forsake us not when our strength is failing,  
Be our staff when courage is departing,  
Oh, not to bitter Death give up Thy children,  
Almighty God, in whom we all are trusting;  
Merciful God, great God of all the Heavens,  
Oh Lord, forsake us not! Have mercy on us!”

Thus they advanced in close order of battle. With unmitigated surprise the Huns had beheld the approaching columns. Howls, and the hissing, devilish cry of “*Hui! hui!*” was their response to the “*Media vita.*” Ellak likewise now divided his horsemen for a regular attack, and the fighting continued fiercer than ever. The Hunnic horsemen soon broke through the ranks of the small body of the monks of St. Gall, and a close fight then began. It was strength wrestling with swiftness, German awkwardness against Hunnic cunning.

The earth of the Hegau was then dyed red with the blood of many a pious man. Tutilo, the strong, was slain. He had pulled down a Hun from his horse by the feet, and, swinging the wry-faced wretch through the air, split his skull against a stone; but a moment afterward an arrow pierced the temple of the hoary warrior. Like the victorious hymns of the heavenly host, it sounded through his wounded brain; then he fell down on

## Ekkehard

his slain foe. Sindolt, the wicked, atoned for many a bad trick which he had played his brothers in former times by the death-wound in his breast; and nothing did it avail Dubslan, the Scot, that he had made a vow to St. Minwaloius, to go barefoot to Rome, if he would protect him in this battle—for he also was carried dead out of the affray.

When the blows rained down on the helmets like hailstones on slate roofs, old Moengal drew his hood over his head, so that he could look neither to the right nor to the left; then throwing away his spear, he cried: "Out with thee now, my old Cambutta." Unbuckling his beloved shillalah, which had accompanied him, fastened to his back, he now stood like a thrasher on the barn-floor. For some time a horseman had capered around him. "*Kyrie eleison!*" sang out the old man, breaking the horse's skull at one blow. With both feet the rider jumped to the ground, grazing Moengal's arm with his crooked sabre. "Heigho," exclaimed he, "in spring 'tis a good thing to be bled; but take care, little surgeon!" aiming a blow at him, as if he wanted to strike him ten fathoms deep into the ground. But the Hun evaded the blow, and while doing so the helmet fell off and disclosed a soft and rosy face, framed in by long wavy tresses interwoven with red ribbons. Before Moengal could think of aiming an-

## Ekkehard

other blow, his antagonist jumped up at him like a tiger-cat; the young, fresh face approached his, affording him as it were in his old days an opportunity of culling a kiss from coral lips; but the moment after he received a sharp bite on his cheek. Claspings his assailant, he felt a soft and slender waist. "Take thyself away, goblin," cried he. "Has hell sent out her she-devils also?" Here, another bite, for the sake of symmetry, saluted him on the left cheek. He started back, but before he had raised his bludgeon again Erica had jumped on a horse which had lost its rider, and gaily laughing she rode away, swift as a dream that vanishes at cock-crow. . . .

In the midst of the vassals fought Master Spazzo, the chamberlain, heading a troop. The slow advance had rather pleased him, but when the fight seemed to come to no conclusion, and men were clinging to each other, like the hounds to the deer in a chase, then it became rather too much for him. A dreamy, pensive mood came over him in the middle of the raging battle, and only when a passing rider pulled off his helmet, as an acceptable booty, was he roused from his meditations, and when the same, renewing the experiment, tried to drag off his mantle, he cried out angrily: "Is it not yet enough, thou marksman of the Devil?" dealing him at the same time a thrust with his long sword, which pinned the Hun's thigh to

## Ekkehard

his own horse. Master Spazzo then thought of giving him his death-blow, but on looking into his face he found it so very ugly that he resolved to bring him home to his mistress, as a living memento of the battle. So he made the wounded man his prisoner. His name was Cappan, and putting his head under Master Spazzo's arm, in sign of submission, he grinned with delight, showing two rows of shining white teeth, perceiving that his life had been spared.

Hornbog had led his troops against the brothers of the Reichenau. Here also grim Death was reaping a rich harvest. The cloister walls glistened in the distance over the lake, like an appeal to the combatants to exert their utmost strength; and many a Hun who came within reach of their swords found out that he was treading on Suabian ground, where heavy blows are as plentiful as wild strawberries in summer. But the ranks of the brothers also were considerably thinned. Quirinius, the scrivener, was resting forever from the writing-cramp, which had caused the spear in his right hand to tremble. Beside him there fell Wiprecht, the astronomer, and Kerimold, the master of salmon-fishing, and Witigowo, the architect. Who knows them all, the nameless heroes who met a glorious end that day?

Only one of the monks had reason to be grateful to a Hunnic arrow, and that was brother Pil-



## Ekkehard

geram. He was born at Cologne on the Rhine, and had carried his thirst of knowledge, as well as a mighty goitre, to St. Pirmin's isle, where he was one of the most learned and most pious monks; but his goitre increased and he became hypochondriac over the ethics of Aristotle, so that Heribald had often said to him: "Pilgrim, I pity thee." But now a Hunnic arrow pierced the excrescence on his throat. "Farewell, friend of my youth!" cried he on sinking down; but the wound was not dangerous, and when his consciousness returned, he felt his throat as well as his head considerably lightened, and from that moment he never opened Aristotle again.

Round the standard of St. Gall a select body of men had rallied. The black streamers still floated in the air from the image on the cross; but the contest was doubtful. With word and action, Ekkehard encouraged his companions not to give way, but it was Ellak himself who fought against them. The bodies of slain men and horses cumbered the ground in confused heaps. They who survived had done their duty, and when all are brave no single heroic deed can claim its special share of glory. Sir Burkhard's sword had received a new baptism of blood in Ekkehard's hands, but in vain had he fiercely attacked Ellak, the chieftain; for after having exchanged a few blows and thrusts, they were separated again by

## Ekkehard

other combatants. Already the cross, towering on high, began to waver, aimed at by unceasing arrows, when a loud cry of surprise rang through the ranks; for from the hill on which stood the tower of Hohenfriedingen two unknown horsemen in strange-looking armor came galloping at full speed toward the scene of battle. One of them, who was of mighty bulk, sat heavily on his steed. Both shield and harness were of antiquated shape, but the faded golden ornaments indicated the high birth of the wearer. A golden band encircled his helmet, from which a tuft of red feathers waved. His mantle fluttering in the wind, and his lance leveled, he looked like a picture of the olden times; like King Saul in Folkard's psalm-book riding to meet David. Close by his side rode his companion, a faithful vassal, ready to succor and protect him.

"'Tis the Archangel Michael!" cried some in the Christian ranks, and with this their strength rallied. The sun was shining brightly on the strange rider's arms—like an omen of victory—and a few moments later the two were in the midst of the battle. He with the gilt armor was looking about for a worthy antagonist, whom he soon found; for when the Hunnic chieftain's keen eyes had spied him out, his horse's head was turned toward him. The spear of the stranger knight passed harmlessly by him, missing its aim; and

## Ekkehard

Ellak's sword was already raised to deal him the death-blow, when his squire threw himself between the two. His broad sword merely struck the enemy's horse, so, bending his head forward, to catch the blow meant for his master, the faithful squire met his death.

With a loud, clattering sound Ellak's horse fell to the ground, but before the sound had quite died out the Hun had already recovered his feet. The unknown knight raised his mace, to break his enemy's head, but Ellak, with his left foot placed tightly on the body of his dead courser, pressed back the raised arm with his sinewy hands, trying at the same time to pull him down. Then, face to face, the two mighty ones began wrestling, so that those around them ceased fighting to look on.

With a cunning movement, Ellak now seized his short sword, but just when he lifted his arm his antagonist's mace came down slowly but heavily on his head. Yet his hand still dealt the thrust, and then lifting it up to his forehead, over which the blood was running in streams, Ellak reeled back on his war-horse, and a moment later the Hunnic chieftain gave up the ghost with a groan of despair.

"Here, sword of God and St. Michael!" triumphantly rose again the joint cry of monks and laymen. Rallying their strength, they rushed on to one last despairing attack. The knight in the gilt

## Ekkehard

armor was still the foremost in the fight. The death of their leader caused such a panic to the Huns that they turned round and sped away in wild, disorderly flight.

The woman of the wood had already perceived the unfavorable turn which the battle was taking. Her horses were ready harnessed, and casting one last angry glance at the victorious monks and the rocky mountain which had once been her home, she drove on the horses at a quick pace in the direction of the Rhine, followed by the rest of the train. "To the Rhine!" was the watchword of the flying Huns. Hornebog was the last who unwillingly turned his back on the battle-field and the Hohentwiel.

"Farewell till next year!" cried he, tauntingly.

The victory was gained; but he whom they believed to be the Archangel Michael sent to their rescue now let his heavy head sink down on his horse's neck. Reins and weapons had both fallen from his hands, and whether the cause was the last thrust of the Hunnic chieftain, or suffocation in the heat of the battle, he was lifted down from his horse a dead man. On opening his vizor, a happy smile was still visible on his wrinkled face, and from that hour the headache of the old man of the Heidenhöhle had ceased forever.

A black dog ran about searching on the battle-field till he found the old man's body. Dismally

## Ekkehard

howling he then licked his forehead, Ekkehard standing near, with a tear in his eye, saying a prayer for the welfare of his soul. . . .

The conquerors returned to the Hohentwiel, their helmets adorned with green fir twigs, and leaving twelve of the brothers behind to watch the dead on the battle-field. Of the Huns, one hundred and eighty had fallen in battle, while the Suabian vassalage had lost ninety-six, the Reichenau monks eighteen, and those of St. Gall twenty, besides the old man and Rauching, his bondman.

With a handkerchief tied round his face, Moengal stalked over the field, using his shillalah as a walking-staff. One by one he examined the dead. "Hast thou not seen a Hun among them who in reality is a Hunnic woman?" he asked one of the brothers keeping watch.

"No," was the reply.

"Then I may as well go home," said Moengal.

## VOLUME ONE

